

EM NOME DE DEUS:  
THE JOURNAL OF  
THE FIRST VOYAGE  
OF VASCO DA GAMA  
TO INDIA, 1497–1499

Translated and edited by  
GLENN J. AMES

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Series Editor: GLENN J. AMES

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The Journal of the First Voyage of  
Vasco da Gama to India,  
1497–1499

# European Expansion and Indigenous Response

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VOLUME 4

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“I had a fixed purpose when I put to sea.  
As I sat in the boat with my band of men,  
I meant to perform to the uttermost  
    what your people wanted,  
    or perish in the attempt, . . .  
And I shall fulfill that purpose,  
prove myself with a proud deed  
    or meet my death”

*Beowulf*, lines 632–38



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## GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

As Adam Smith wrote in his seminal *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), "The discovery of America, and that of a passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, are the two greatest and most important events recorded in the history of mankind." It is hardly surprising, therefore, that this process of European expansion and global colonization from ca. 1450 to 1900 has attracted extensive historical research and debate over the years. Since the Enlightenment, philosophers, economists, and historians have all sought to analyze and understand the vast range of human experiences embodied in this creation of a world market economy and global society. Much of the scholarly work completed from ca. 1880 to 1940 fell within the limits of what M.N. Pearson has aptly described as the "seeds of empire" school of imperial historiography. Eurocentric, Whigish, even jingoistic, this work was largely compiled by English, Dutch, French, and Portuguese civil servants active in the administration of the twilight empires of those European powers. It was engendered by a need to glorify past colonial adventures as a means of legitimizing modern European imperialism and, as such, was less than objective. In the decolonization period from ca. 1945 to 1975, the field was tainted by this legacy. In the 1970s, the focus shifted to the long-ignored experiences of the indigenous peoples, sometimes characterized as "the Other", in this process and their relationship with the Europeans, who were largely re-cast as aggressors and not "heroes."

Recently, more balanced studies have appeared, embracing both the European and indigenous perspective. This recent historiography has laudably succeeded in providing an analysis of the *symbiotic* economic, social, religious, and cultural interaction between Europe and the wider world which accelerated following the voyages of Columbus and Vasco da Gama. *European Expansion and Indigenous Response* is a series dedicated to contributing to this more balanced historiography. Its volumes will present a broad intellectual perspective, examining whenever possible European and non-European perspectives. These volumes will also utilize a multi-disciplinary approach with diverse forms of analysis from all relevant scholarly disciplines. Its monographs, edited volumes and edited translations will provide new ideas and new perspectives on a topic that has fascinated scholars for the last half millennium.

Glenn J. Ames



## PREFACE

Beowulf, Odysseus, Achilles, Aeneas, Joan of Arc, Marco Polo. Throughout recorded history, civilizations have embraced the epic adventures and struggles of their heroes and heroines. More often than not, the deeds of these men and women have transcended history and entered the realm of folklore, myth, and legend. Some of these iconic personalities engaged in mortal combat with real or mythical foes. Beowulf slayed the fearsome Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon Sua, suffering fatal wounds for his trouble. The wrathful Achilles avenged the death of Patroclus by slaying Hector, thus sealing the doom of Troy; while the young Joan of Arc lifted the siege of Orleans and turned the tide of the Hundred Years War before being martyred by the English. More commonly, these iconic historical figures undertook long and difficult voyages, in doing so overcoming both mortal and divine dangers. Odysseus survived a myriad of challenges on his ten year return journey to Ithaca from the Trojan Wars. Marco Polo traversed the Silk Road to the China of Kublai Khan and back, encouraging interchange between Europe and Asia. Aeneas, who survived the destruction of Troy, led his Aeneads to Italy to become the progenitors of the Romans. In a more modern context, the travels of Lewis, Clark and Sacagawea across North America, Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay scaling Mt. Everest, or even Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walking on the Moon all extended this heroic motif to their own generations. In these deeds, divine intervention was also a common theme. Pre-Christian Gods had intervened and aided Beowulf, Odysseus, Achilles, and Aeneas in their battles; while later, the Christian God had assisted Joan of Arc and her heroic successors.

Vasco da Gama is another of these iconic historical figures. His first voyage to India undertaken from 1497 to 1499 constitutes one of the great events of the Renaissance and the Age of European Discovery. For centuries, European powers had sought a direct sea link to the riches of the Indian Ocean basin and beyond. Da Gama's voyage forged this crucial link in a developing world market economy. Within a generation or so of his death, Luís Vaz de Camões had already immortalized da Gama's voyage and deeds in his sublime epic poem *Os Lusíadas*. What Homer and Virgil had done for Odysseus, Achilles, and Aeneas,

Camões did for Vasco da Gama. The challenges of his epic voyage in search of “Christians and Spices” by sailing around the southern Cape of Africa, divine intervention and all, were depicted in the *ottava rima* decasyllables of Camões.

But as Sanjay Subrahmanyam has shown, when dealing with the life and deeds of Vasco da Gama it is exceedingly difficult to separate the iconic and mythical from the real actions of the man and their import.<sup>1</sup> In this quest to cut through the accumulated panegyric of the past centuries, we are therefore very fortunate to possess a primary source on his notable first voyage. More importantly, this document affords us a more contemporary and everyman description of these events than the one provided in the poetry of Camões or the chronicler accounts written in the 16th century. This document is the *Roteiro* (rutter) or *Journal* of the voyage kept by one of the members of Vasco da Gama’s crew. This source not only provides glimpses into da Gama’s personality, but also furnishes a much needed counter-point to the deification of these events which since the days of Camões has periodically colored the historiography. This is not to say that the *Roteiro* forces us to deconstruct and negate the deeds of Vasco da Gama and his crew. Rather, in describing them in common and eyewitness fashion, the *Roteiro* allows us to appreciate da Gama’s accomplishments stripped of hyperbole and to judge them for what they were, as they happened. Moreover, the author’s straightforward and unadorned prose provides valuable insights into what the average European of the late 15th century first thought when confronted by the diverse and rich cultures of Africa and India at this time. I have long believed that this document deserves a far greater audience than it has hitherto received, especially in English.

During the process of completing this project, I have accumulated a long list of professional and personal debts of gratitude. To that end, I would like to thank Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the American Institute of Indian Studies, and The University of Toledo for providing funding over the past few years for the research in Portugal and India which has been incorporated into this work. More specifically, Malyn D.D. Newitt, Michael N. Pearson, Francis A. Dutra, Charles Beatty Medina, Douglas Wheeler, Timothy Coates, and Timothy Walker offered kind words of advice, which greatly assisted me. I would also

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama* (Cambridge, 1997).

like to thank Sandy Bederman and Francis Herbert in London for graciously providing me with information on E.G. Ravenstein gleaned from the archives of the Royal Geographical Society. In Lisbon, my thanks go to Sergio Mascarenhas and Teotonio de Souza for their advice, and the Marques Vidal and Sá Fernandes families for making my research trips there enjoyable as well as productive. In Goa, I would like to thank Sudeep and Shyamalee Chakravarti, Xavier and Sonali Furtado, Desmond Nazareth, Dilip Barreto, Oscar Noronha, Mafalda Mascarenhas, and Mangesh Kankonkar. Finally, as always, thanks to Beth, Miranda, and Ethan for making life both enjoyable and interesting at home and abroad.



## BACKGROUND TO THE VOYAGE

The decade of the 1490s is arguably one of the most significant in the history of humankind. During those ten short years unalterable steps were taken that forever linked the long disparate regions of the globe, thus initiating the process of economic, social, cultural, and religious interchange that forms the sinews of the modern world. A regular sea-borne interchange between Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Asia was established which has survived ever since. World history for the first time became a reality. In that process there were two seminal voyages which initiated and helped to cement these profound societal links: that of Christopher Columbus from 1492 to 1493 and that of Vasco da Gama from 1497 to 1499. Commenting on these voyages, Adam Smith declared in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776): "The discovery of America, and that of a passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, are the two greatest and most important events recorded in the history of mankind."<sup>1</sup> Of the two men and their accomplishments, Columbus's discovery of the "New World" has received far more scholarly attention over the years, especially in the United States. But to contemporaries, da Gama's voyage around the Cape of Good Hope to the tropical spice producing shores of the Malabar coast of India was deemed to be far more significant in terms of immediate economic impact and cultural exchange. As a feat of daring, leadership, and seamanship, Columbus's four week jaunt from the Canaries to the Bahamas also pales in comparison to 23,000 miles covered by Vasco da Gama, including more than three months navigating in the South Atlantic out of sight of land.

Vasco da Gama's first voyage was the culmination of eight decades of sometimes sporadic, sometimes inspired exploration of the west coast of Africa by the Portuguese Crown and its minions. Fueled by a burning desire to reach the source of gold, ivory, slaves, and eventually Asian spices, as well as a crusading quest to combat Islam and spread the Christian faith, this campaign began with the conquest of Ceuta on the North African coast in 1415 by king D. João I, the creator of the Aviz dynasty in Portugal. Sailing lateen caravels, a hybrid vessel

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nation* (2 vols., Chicago, 1976), II: 141.



ideally suited to the challenges of such nautical work, and energized by the patronage of D. João's third son, Prince Henry 'The Navigator,' the Portuguese soon discovered the Atlantic islands of Porto Santo, Madeira, the Azores, and the Canaries. By 1446, Henry's captains had reached Sierra Leone, acquiring gold and slaves in the process. Two years later, the Portuguese built a fort on Arguin island off the Guinea coast to protect their increasingly lucrative interests. By the time of Henry's death in 1460, Portugal was the preeminent European power with respect to maritime technology, skills, and overseas exploration. Not only was the African coast yielding its secrets, trading products, and wealth, but this quest for gold, slaves, and ivory had gradually become intertwined with the quest for the spices and riches of India and beyond.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, following Henry's death, the exploration campaign languished to a degree under king D. Afonso V (r. 1438–1481), who much preferred crusading against the Moors in Morocco to outfitting fleets of exploration. He had therefore leased out the trade to private bidders like Fernão Gomes who were obliged to explore 100 leagues of coastline each year. His son, the formidable D. João II (r. 1481–1495), however, firmly embraced the earlier zeal of his uncle. He restored direct royal control over the Guinea trade, built the fortress of São Jorge da Mina in 1482, and oversaw crucial navigational advances. By the early 1490s, Portuguese mapmakers had added a single meridian line to traditional Portolani charts, marked with degrees of latitude. To compensate for the loss of the Pole Star and a lower sun closer to the equator, D. João's Mathematical Council also recommended the calculation of latitude with a sun sighting at midday with either an astrolabe or quadrant in combination with a table of declination. Exploiting these advances, Bartolomeu Dias completed the journey around the southern cape of Africa in a voyage of 1487–1488. To ensure future investment, the astute D. João promptly changed Dias's initial name of the "Cape of

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<sup>2</sup> Standard works in English on the early phases of Portuguese expansion include: C.R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825* (New York, 1969); F.C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India* (2 vols., London, 1894), R.S. Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India, 1497–1550* (London, 1899), Edgar Prestage, *The Portuguese Pioneers* (London, 1933), George D. Winus and B.W. Diffie, *Foundations of Portuguese Empire, 1415–1580* (Minneapolis, 1977), Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700* (London, 1993), M.N. Pearson, *The Portuguese in India* (Cambridge, 1987), and A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *A World on the Move: The Portuguese in Africa, Asia, and America, 1415–1808* (Baltimore, 1993, 1998). On Prince Henry, cf. R.H. Major, *The Life of Prince Henry of Portugal, Surnamed the Navigator* (London, 1868) and Peter Russell, *Prince Henry the 'Navigator': A Life*, (New Haven, 2001).

Storms” to the “Cape of Good Hope.” Wanting as much knowledge as possible about what awaited the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean trade, the king had also sent out two Arabic-speaking agents to explore the region in 1487. Afonso de Paiva and Pedro da Covilhã traversed much of the Middle East, East Africa, and India, and D. João had probably received a report from them written in Cairo in 1490. He thereupon began preparations for a voyage to India and its much coveted spices by ordering three new ships built from trees on the royal estates before his death in October 1495.

It would, however, take another two years, or nearly a full decade following Dias’s triumphant return, to finally dispatch the first ‘India fleet’ under the command of Vasco da Gama. This decade long gap is surprising since as early as 1485, D. João II had informed Pope Innocent VIII that the Portuguese were already at the “doors of India.” But there were several compelling reasons for this delay. First, D. João waited for accurate intelligence from Paiva and Covilhã. Second, the campaign in Morocco against Islam was especially fierce between 1487 and 1490. The tragic death of his only legitimate heir, D. Afonso, in 1491 also caused the king much anguish. D. João had also been forced to deal with the societal fallout of the arrival of large numbers of Jews, who sought shelter in his realm following their mass expulsion from Castile and Aragon in 1492. More daunting perhaps was the arrival of Columbus in Lisbon harbor in March 1493 claiming to have reached the Indies by sailing west, just as he had promised D. João he would in 1484 when he offered his services to the Portuguese king! Pope Alexander VI was from Aragon, and D. João, with good reason, expected him to favor the ‘Spanish’ cause in this expanding overseas rivalry. The new bishop of Rome did not disappoint. He promptly issued four bulls favorable to Ferdinand and Isabella, granting them control over the lands Columbus had discovered or would discover to the west, with the *Inter Caetera* (1493) proclaiming all land and sea 100 leagues west and south of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands to be a Spanish sphere of exploration. Convinced that he had no chance of a fair hearing in Rome, D. João instead negotiated the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) with his royal cousins. This document fixed the demarcation line 270 leagues further west than that of the *Inter Caetera* and in doing so assured Portugal of the true ocean passage to India as well as most of the South Atlantic including Brazil.

In the wake of this diplomatic triumph, D. João died, and the final reason for the long gap between the voyages of Dias and da Gama relates to the delays inherent in the succession. D. João had no legitimate children and failed to legitimize his bastard son, D. Jorge, then Master of the military Orders of Santiago and Aviz. In the end, D. Manuel I (r. 1495–1521), the duke of Beja, cousin and brother-in-law of D. João II assumed the throne. The new king devoted a good deal of time in 1496–1497 negotiating a marriage treaty with Ferdinand and Isabella, for the hand of their eldest daughter, D. Isabel. But D. Manuel also found time to consider questions relating to overseas discovery and in particular the expedition to India. In early 1496 he called his Council together to debate these issues. Although some of his councilors argued that the Crown should merely maintain the status quo achieved with Tordesillas and eschew the costs of attempting to expand the discoveries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, D. Manuel rejected this advice and resolved to at last fulfill the work of his royal predecessors by sending a fleet to India.

### *Vasco da Gama*

The need for a skillful commander for this daunting enterprise was a crucial precondition for the success of this long discussed and anticipated voyage. In January 1497, D. Manuel I selected Vasco da Gama to command his India fleet. Who was this man, and why was he selected? The lack of surviving manuscript documents complicates the task of answering these important questions. Da Gama himself either generated few documents during his lifetime or the ravages of time have deprived them to contemporary historians. His few surviving documents largely relate to mundane business matters. Moreover, the main chroniclers of this period, João de Barros, Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, Gaspar Correia, and Damião Goís offer conflicting evidence.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, based

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Barros, *Décadas de Ásia: Primeira Década* (1552), edited by Hernani Cidade and Manuel Múrias, (Lisbon, 1945), Castanheda, *História do Descobrimento & Conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses* (1551–1561), 3rd edition, edited by Pedro de Azevedo (Coimbra, 1924), Goís, *Crónica do Felicíssimo Rei D. Manuel* (1567–1568) Part I edited by Joaquim Martins Teixeira de Carvalho and David Lopes (Coimbra, 1926), and Correia, *Lendas da Índia* (ca. 1541–1561, 1st edition, Lisbon, 1858), translated and edited by Henry E.J. Stanley as *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama and his Viceroyalty* (London, 1869).



1. Early 18th century painting belonging to the Marquezes de Niza, found at Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa.

on the extant sources, it is possible to compile an acceptable synthesis on his family background and the first three decades of Vasco da Gama's life. As early as 1415, the da Gama family had strong roots in the province of the Alentejo. While the family was neither particularly rich nor of the high nobility, it had a long and honorable history serving the Crown. Part of the minor nobility, it traced its descent from one Álvaro Annes da Gama, who fought with distinction in the Reconquest battles of Afonso III (r. 1248–1279). Vasco da Gama's grandfather and namesake had carried the royal standard in D. Afonso V's succession war with Castile in the mid-1470s. Initially, the family had ties to the military order of Aviz. It was also linked to the senhorial house of Prince D. Fernando, the powerful younger brother of D. Afonso V, and father of D. Diogo, the duke of Viseu; D. Leonor, the wife of D. João II; and D. Manuel I.

Vasco's grandfather had four sons, and this generation of the family shifted its allegiance to another of the powerful military orders in the kingdom, the Order of Santiago. His eldest son, Estêvão da Gama, was a *cavaleiro* or knight in the household of D. Fernando. Through these powerful connections and services in the 1460s and 1470s, Estêvão da Gama accumulated several income generating grants. He also married well. His wife, D. Isabel Sodré, was a descendant of Frederick Sudley of Gloustershire, who came to Portugal with the earl of Cambridge in 1381–1382 to fight for the house of Aviz against Castile. The family also had connections to D. Diogo and the Order of Christ. In early Renaissance Portugal, the da Gama family therefore had ties to the four most important sources of institutional largesse in the kingdom: the Crown, the Order of Aviz, the Order of Santiago and the Order of Christ.

After their marriage, Estêvão da Gama and D. Isabel Sodré resided in the coastal town of Sines. In May 1478, Estêvão was named *alcaide-mor* of the town. The marriage produced six children: Paulo da Gama, João Sodre, Vasco da Gama, Pedro da Gama, Aires da Gama, and a daughter Teresa. In light of the lack of birth or baptism records, the best source of information on the family is a document from 1480. In November of that year, the bishop of Safim visited Sines, to confirm orders and promote others to first tonsure. On the 5th of that month, the bishop promoted the following members of the da Gama family: Vasco da Gama, illegitimate son of Estêvão, and Paulo da Gama, João Sodré, and Vasco da Gama, three legitimate sons of the da Gama-Sodré union. Since first tonsure usually took place at 10 or 11 years of age, Vasco da Gama was most probably born in 1469. The only solid docu-

mentary evidence we have for the first fifteen years of his life relates to his involvement with the Order of Santiago. He was listed 6th among those who took the habit of the Order at the formal 1481 meeting and a roll of the *matriculas* of the Order from 1480 to 1483 also notes him among its members.

Not much else is known of Vasco da Gama's formative years. Some historians have argued that he traveled to the provincial capital of Évora, where he completed his formal studies, perhaps even receiving lessons from the Jewish master Abraham Zacuto in astronomy. Other scholars, citing a 1478 safe-conduct pass through Castile to Morocco for one "Vasco da Gama", have argued that he was already in the service of the Crown fighting in North Africa and Iberia. Based on the extant documents, assuming his date of birth as 1469, and with the *a priori* knowledge of his later skills, we may advance the following interpretation. The young Vasco da Gama was most probably exposed in Sines to the rich folklore of the sea and to the voyages of discovery that had been undertaken during the days of his grandfather and father. The lure of gold, slaves, ivory, and crusading against the 'Moors' was probably very strong to a younger son of a minor, albeit rising, noble family. Da Gama had also probably picked up an acceptable level of practical navigation, along with knowledge of the instruments that were revolutionizing sea-travel for the Portuguese, the compass and astrolabe. These instruments in combination with detailed *roteiros* (rutters) kept on previous voyages, and tables detailing the declination of the sun, would allow da Gama to fix latitude with reasonable precision during his voyage. By all accounts, the young Vasco possessed a solid physique and constitution, a steely resolve, and *sang-froid*. He was exceedingly loyal in friendship, terrible in enmity. Overall, da Gama spent most of his first twenty years learning the lessons and 'trade' of his father and of Portugal: honing his martial and maritime skills, learning the delicacies of advancing in royal service and in service to the Order of Santiago.

In 1492, that seminal year in which Columbus sailed west in search of Asian wealth, da Gama emerges from the 'clouds' of sparse historical documentation. According to the chronicler Garcia de Resende, in that year ships of the king of France, Charles VIII, captured a Portuguese ship returning from São Jorge da Mina on the Guinea coast loaded with gold. In retaliation, D. João II ordered the confiscation of merchandise on French ships then anchored in the ports of Lisbon, Aveiro, Setúbal and the Algarve. The king "wrote to Setubal in the kingdom of the Algarve to Vasco da Gama, noble of his house and after the count of

Vidigueira and admiral of the Indies, a man in which he had confidence and had served in the armadas and naval matters to accomplish these tasks, which he did with great brevity.” Charles VIII quickly restored the caravel and its rich cargo to D. João II. This episode shows that D. João held the young da Gama in high regard both with respect to his maritime skills and his ability to lead men and take decisive action. How he had previously demonstrated these skills to the king is not certain. Perhaps the most convincing argument is that one facet of his service to the Order of Santiago in the late 1480s and early 1490s had been to protect the trade of the valuable towns that the Order possessed like Setúbal, Seisimbra and Sines from Atlantic corsairs. Successful naval engagements with such interlopers would have furnished a valuable proving ground for da Gama. In any event, da Gama, young noble of the royal house, knight of Santiago, and resident of Setúbal served his king well in the French enterprise.

In late 1495, during the initial months of D. Manuel’s reign, Vasco da Gama received two important grants from D. Jorge, the Grand Master of the Order of Santiago. On the 17th and 18th of December, da Gama, as “*fidalgo* of the household of the King my Lord and a knight in the Order of Santiago,” was granted the commanderies (revenue yielding territorial grants) of Mouguelas and Chouparria along with all their benefits, rights, rents and tributes. These were important commanderies within the hierarchy of the Order’s holdings: they were not only close to the seat of the Order in Palmela, but they yielded him an annual income of ca. 80,000 *reais*. Why was da Gama given these lucrative commanderies at this time? The formal document states in part: “the many services that Vasco da Gama, *fidalgo* of the household of the King my Lord...has rendered and I hope will render in the future to the King my Lord and father whose soul is with God, and to the King my Lord, and to me.” These grants make it clear that da Gama, building on the accomplishments of his father, and given his own services, was clearly a rising personality both at court and in Palmela and merited such visible recognition. As such, D. Jorge was no doubt anxious to cultivate his “friendship” and clientage. Perhaps the most visible sign, however, that da Gama was indeed both a skillful courtier and highly respected *fidalgo* of the king’s household by this point was his selection in January 1497 to command the long awaited expedition to India anticipated by Dias’s voyage.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For background in English on Vasco da Gama, cf. Elaine Sanceau, *Good Hope: The*

*Command of the 1497 Fleet*

Unfortunately the documentation on the precise reasons for Vasco da Gama's selection as Captain major (*Capitão-mor*) of the 1497 fleet is also very incomplete. Each of the contemporary or near contemporary chroniclers has a different version of this decision. Neither D. Manuel's letters on his selection or his formal instructions to da Gama have survived. Barros and Damião de Góis, maintain that his father, Estêvão had originally been offered the command by D. João II. Since he had died, D. Manuel had then offered it to his son, who had accepted it almost as a right of inheritance. Castanheda claimed that the command was originally offered to his older brother Paulo, who declined based on ill-health. He did, however, agree to accompany the fleet "as a captain of one of the ships to advise and assist" the mission. Gaspar Correia, whose version was written later than the others, provides an interesting, albeit apocryphal story. "One day as the king sat in his council chamber examining documents, he by chance raised his eyes as Vasco da Gama happened to pass through the room." At that point: "The king felt his heart go into transports as his eyes rested upon Gama." D. Manuel then called da Gama before him and stated: "It would give me great happiness if you would take upon yourself a commission for which I have need of you, [one] in which you will find much travail." Da Gama had then kissed his hand declaring; "Sire, I am already rewarded for any labor that may be, since you ask that I serve, and I shall perform [that service] as long as my life lasts."<sup>5</sup>

If we largely reject the chronicler's reasons ranging from hereditary to divine, why then was da Gama chosen? In this decision, there were no doubt personal, political, and social considerations at work. On the personal side, da Gama possessed the physical and psychological requirements for the job. He had a fine physique and was well-versed in the art of fighting and warfare. The young *fidalgos* had demonstrated these martial skills during the 1480s and 1490s. As Góis noted "he was a single man of a perfect age to endure the hardships of such a voyage."

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*Voyage of Vasco da Gama* (London, 1967), Henry H. Hart, *Sea Road to the Indies: An Account of the Voyages and Exploits of the Portuguese Navigators, Together with the Life and Times of Dom Vasco da Gama* (New York, 1950), Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend*; Glenn J. Ames, *Vasco da Gama: Renaissance Crusader* (New York, 2005); and Francis A. Dutra, "A New Look at the Life and Career of Vasco da Gama" *Portuguese Studies Review* Volume 6, No. 2 (Fall-Winter 1997-1998), pp. 23-28.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Correia, *The Three Voyages*, pp. 27-30.



Da Gama also possessed the requisite nautical skills gained most probably from a life spent largely on the Atlantic coast of Portugal as well as any formal education he may have received in Évora or elsewhere. He certainly had the reputation for these skills, as his selection and performance in the 1492 French affair demonstrated. Da Gama and the other men in his family also had the reputation as hard and, at times, ruthless men. This was another prerequisite for the position. Mutinies on long ocean passages during this period were never far away as both Dias and Columbus could attest. The need to maintain firm discipline from the outset of the voyage was vital. Such discipline demanded harsh, unmerciful punishment. For a man like da Gama, such actions did not pose a problem.<sup>6</sup>

Socially, da Gama's family had risen sufficiently during the previous two generations to merit such a position of command. At the same time, it had not risen so high as to pose any type of threat to D. Manuel or the senhorial families in the kingdom in the event of his success. The family, thanks to previous meritorious services in Castile and North Africa, was firmly entrenched in the nobility of the royal household, as well as the hierarchy of the Order of Santiago. It also had secure ties to the Orders of Avis and Christ. It certainly possessed sufficient social standing and noble pedigree to command the small fleet that was being sent out. Yet, the mission of 1497 was much more than just another voyage of exploration as, for example, had been the case with Dias's 1487–1488 experience. The 1497 expedition was in essence an armed embassy into the still largely uncharted political, economic, and religious landscape of the Indian Ocean basin. As a result, its commander would also have to possess the diplomatic skills and social graces required to treat with indigenous rulers along the east coast of Africa and the west coast of India. By the mid-1490s, da Gama had also obtained many of these social and diplomatic skills. As his contemporary Duarte Pacheco Pereira noted, D. Manuel "ordered Vasco da Gama, *commendador* of the Order of Santiago and *courtier* at his court, as captain of his ships

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<sup>6</sup> Pablo E. Perez Mallaina, *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1998), pp. 191ff. has argued that consultation between officers and crews especially during the Middle Ages was an accepted part of nautical life. However, this did not negate the need to deal effectively to any perceived threat to the Captain's ultimate authority especially on exceedingly long voyages of discovery. Cf. also Francisco Contente Domingues, *A vida a bordo na Carreira da Índia (século XVI)* (Lisbon, 1988).

and men to discover and reconnoiter the seas and lands about which the ancients had filled us with such great fears and dread.”<sup>7</sup>

*The Fleet and its Preparations*

Soon after his decision to support the expedition to India, D. Manuel gave orders to resume work on preparing the ships and materials necessary for this voyage. The king chose Bartolomeu Dias, the skilled mariner who had first rounded the tip of Africa, to oversee these tasks. The king ordered him to do his utmost to ensure the success of this difficult enterprise “following what he knew was required, in order to resist the fury of the seas in the vicinity of the great Cape of Good Hope.” Dias had begun work on the design and construction of two of these ships during the reign of D. João II. In doing so, he had indeed modified the classic, shallow draft caravels that the Portuguese had utilized effectively to explore the coasts of west Africa in order to create a ship more suited to the storms, waves, and pounding of the South Atlantic. The two ships built were sturdier, heavier vessels called *naus*. They had three masts; the fore and main rigged with square sails, and mizzen or rear rigged with a triangular or lateen sail to facilitate maneuverability. These ships were perhaps 100–120 fifteenth century tons, and seventy-five to eighty-five feet long, they had a flat bottom with a high square stern and bow, which could be used as a fourth mast rigged with a square spritsail. The bowsprits carried a carved wooden figurehead of the ship’s patron, and their sails the Red Cross of the Order of Christ. The hold was divided into three compartments: the rear for powder, shot, firearms and other weapons, the middle for water casks, extra cable and riggings, and the forward for food and other spare equipment. The ships had two decks, with the lower one, like the hold, divided into three compartments for more provisions, trading goods and gifts for the peoples they encountered. Boards were also attached near the waterline to reduce rolling and pitching in heavy seas. These *naus* had a larger draft and were slower than caravels but da Gama and his crews would gain in available space, comfort and overall seaworthiness on the voyage which awaited them.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* edited by Damião Peres (Lisbon, 3rd Edition, 1988), LIV C.2 (196–197).

To combat barnacles and marine borers, Dias had the hulls of the ships sealed with a mixture of tallow and pitch or with *cifa*, a thick mixture of tallow and fish oil. Nevertheless, as the *Journal* attests it was still necessary for the ships to be periodically beached and cleaned or careened. On those occasions, the insides and outsides were scrubbed, the hull was scraped off and re-caulked with a mixture of quicklime, oakum, and oil. The hulls above the waterline were painted with a tarry mixture to preserve the wood. Strips of wood were nailed along the seams on the inside of the hulls, as were lead strips to help with the pounding of the waves. Leaks, however, were inevitable and wooden pumps were employed to keep these under control. Heavy planks “two fingers thick” were attached to the sides for protection in fights with other ships, especially those equipped with sea-borne artillery. The ships were ballasted with sand gravel and stones, the later used as ammunition as the need arose. The riggings on these two ships were made of flax rope, only after reaching India would cordage of coir (coconut) be adopted. Each of these ships also carried a longboat (*batel*) rowed by 4–6 men for trips to shore or exploring inlets. Both D. João and D. Manuel spared no expense in the construction of these ships. As Duarte Pacheco Pereira wrote, [these ships] “were built by excellent masters and workmen, with strong nails and wood; each ship had three sets of sails and anchors and three or four as much tackle and rigging as was usual.” The ships that Dias built were eventually called the *São Gabriel* and the *São Rafael*. By the late spring of 1497, these two ships had been joined by two others in the Tagus River. The *Berrio* of about 50 tons, was a fast caravel with lateen sails. It had been built in Lagos and may have made several voyages along the African coast. D. Manuel purchased the ship from her owner Berrios, hence her name. The fourth ship was an unnamed store ship purchased from Ayres Correa, a prominent Lisbon ship-owner, of perhaps 200–300 tons. The average speed of these ships in a favorable wind was between 6–8 miles per hour. As for armaments, the fleet carried some 20 guns, the heavier ones fired a stone shot of several pounds, while the lighter ones called bombards were one pound matchlocks. In battle, the soldiers and crews would use common weapons of the late medieval period: crossbows, spears, axes, swords, axes, javelins, and pikes.

After the major questions relating to the vessels had been addressed, the king called for Fernão Lourenço, “a person in whom he [Manuel] had confidence, and one of no small account, and ordered him to equip the armada and provide it with everything necessary as speedily as he

could.” To bake sufficient quantities of the mariner’s staple sea-biscuit or hardtack, great ovens were set up. The exact daily rations aboard the fleet have never been definitively established. But, according to one source, each man probably received something close to the following: 1.5 lbs. of hardtack, 1 lb. Of salted beef or .5 lb. of pork, 2.5 pints of water, one-third gill [gill = .25 pint] of vinegar, and one-sixth gill of olive oil. For the Catholic fast days, .5 lb. of rice, codfish or cheese was given instead of the meat. It is also interesting to note that each man was also allowed 1.25 pints of wine each day! Unfortunately, as we will see, these regular rations did not contain the fresh citrus fruits which would combat the most dreaded of the diseases to afflict seamen during this period: scurvy. Experience had already demonstrated to the Portuguese that these fruits were of great value on long ocean trips. Yet, the expense involved and storage issues meant that while the officers, including Paulo da Gama, may have brought along a private ‘stash’ for their own health, the common seamen and soldiers were dependent on irregular quantities obtained along the way sometimes with lethal results. D. Manuel did order spare sails, tackle, and equipment of all kinds, “and in each vessel all kinds of drugs for the sick, a surgeon, and a priest for confession.” As we will see, the trading goods and gifts embarked, however, would be judged lacking in most ports along the way, and consisted of striped cloth, sugar, honey, glass beads, hand basins, red hats, trousers, bells, tin jewelry, and other similar products. Little gold or silver were embarked.<sup>8</sup>

While these preparations were underway, da Gama busied himself in early 1497 with the selection and recruitment of his crews. For his flagship, Vasco da Gama chose the *São Gabriel* and appointed Gonçalo Álvares as its captain. Álvares was a fine sailor and would later hold the important post of pilot-major of the Portuguese empire in Asia, the State of India (*Estado da Índia*). As the pilot of the *São Gabriel*, da Gama chose Pêro D’Alenquer. D’Alenquer was another wise choice: he had sailed to the Congo with Gonçalo de Sousa in 1490 and had also accompanied Dias on his voyage around the Cape of Good Hope in 1487–1488. The clerk (*escrivão*) was Diogo Dias, the brother of Bartolomeu. Vasco’s older brother, Paulo da Gama, captained the *São Rafael*. The pilot of the *São Rafael* was João de Coimbra who, among other things, brought a black slave with him for the voyage. João de

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ames, *Vasco da Gama*, pp. 17–26.

Sã served as clerk or scribe. Nicholau Coelho, another tough and experienced sailor, captained the *Berrio*. His pilot was Pêro Escobar (Escobar), who would receive a pension of 4000 *reais* from the king in 1500: "for the service... [he] has performed for us both in the regions of Guinea and in the discovery of the Indies, where we sent him." The clerk of the *Berrio* was Álvaro de Braga, who would eventually head the Portuguese factory at Calicut and be rewarded by D. Manuel in 1501. As captain of the unnamed store-ship, da Gama appointed one of his "retainers" Gonçalo Nunes.<sup>9</sup>

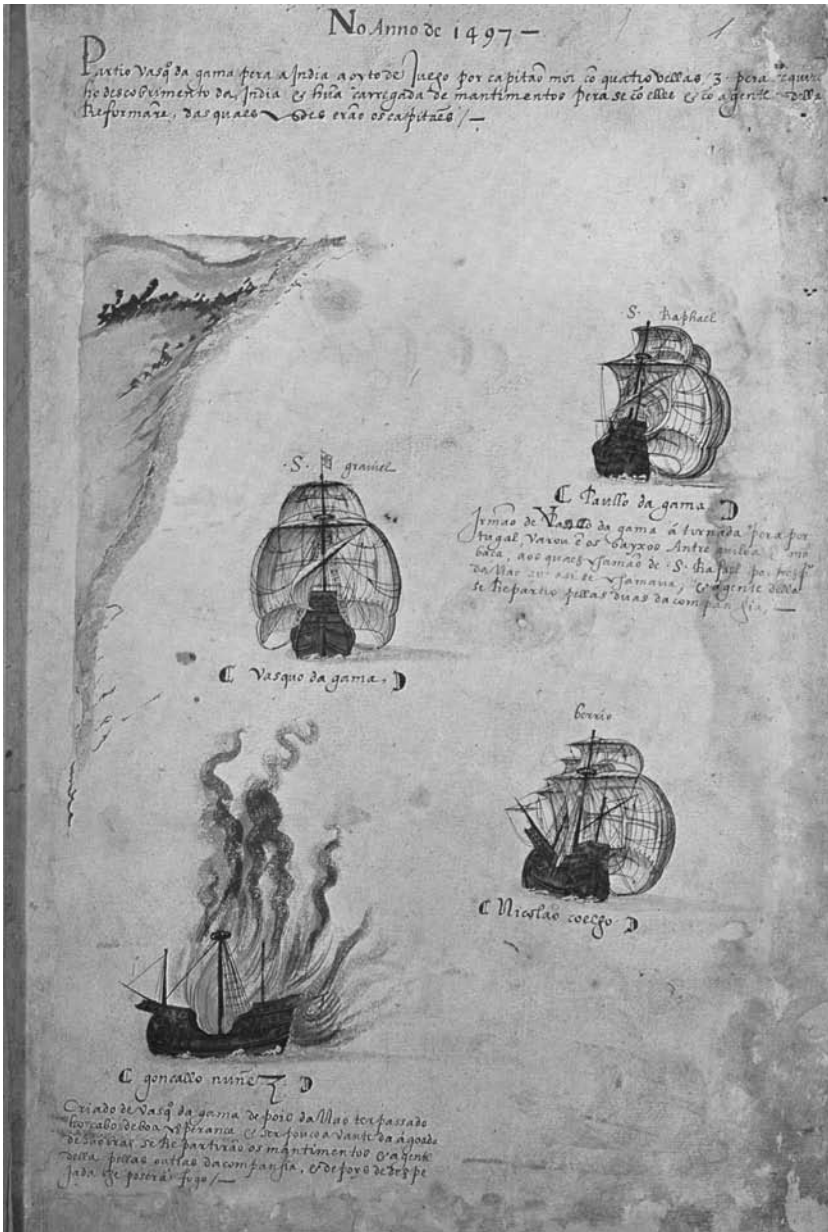
Since the voyage would involve interaction with African tribes, Arabs, and Indian states, two interpreters were selected for the fleet. Martin Afonso had lived in the Congo for some time and knew the dialects of several Bantu tribes. Fernão Martins had spent several years as a captive of the "Moors" and spoke fluent Arabic. The Chaplain of the Fleet and Father Confessor was Pedro de Covilhã, who had been the Prior of a monastery of the Order of Trinity at Lisbon. Ten convict-exiles (*degredados*) were also sent out aboard the fleet.<sup>10</sup> According to Góis, these men were "seized for mortal crimes and whose misdeeds the king pardoned so that they might serve on this voyage, and he granted them grace and mercy, giving them a chance as persons who might prolong their lives, no matter in what manner." According to Correia, Vasco da Gama requested these men "to adventure to leave them behind in desolate lands, where, if they survived, they might prove of value to him when he returned and found them again. Perhaps the most interesting convict was João Nunes a "New Christian", that is a recently converted Jew, who knew some Arabic and Hebrew and remained in India. According to Correia, "he was a man of keen intellect, who could understand the language of the Moors [natives of Calicut] but could not speak it."<sup>11</sup>

There have been various estimates on the exact number of men who sailed aboard the four ships of da Gama's fleet. One problem has been the issue of who has been included in the various estimates offered;

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Ames, *Vasco da Gama*, pp. 17–28, and Luís Adão da Fonseca, *Vasco da Gama: O Homem, A Viagem, A Época* (Lisbon, 1998), pp. 85–93.

<sup>10</sup> On the *degredados*, cf. Eduardo Bueno, *Náufragos, traficantes e degredados: as primeiras expedições ao Brasil* (Objectiva, 1998); Russell-Wood, *A World on the Move*, p. 106; Geraldo Pieroni, *Vadios e ciganos, heréticos e bruxas: os degredados no Brasil colônia* (Betrand, 2000); and Timothy J. Coates, *Convicts and Orphans: Forced and State-Sponsored Colonizers in the Portuguese Empire, 1550–1755* (Palo Alto, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Correia, *The Three Voyages*, p. 159.



2. The 1497 Armada fleet. *Memoria das Armadas*, Academia das Ciências de Lisboa.

some authorities have evidently counted only the crews while others have included the officers, servants, and slaves. Girolamo Serengi, a Florentine merchant resident in Lisbon, gave 118 in a much-cited letter of the summer of 1499. The chroniclers Góis, Castanheda and Osório all gave the number of 148. Gaspar Correia offered the highest estimate of ca. 260! Unfortunately, the *Journal* is silent on this matter. The generally accepted figure has been the one provided by João de Barros of 170; with 70 on the flagship *São Gabriel*, 50 in the *São Rafael*, 30 in the caravel *Berrio*, and 20 in the storeship.<sup>12</sup> On the *São Gabriel*, the crew probably included: a master, pilot and under-pilot, mate boatswain, twenty able seamen, ten ordinary seamen, two cabin boys, a master gunner, eight bombardiers, four trumpeters, the clerk, a storekeeper, a master-at-arms, the surgeon, two interpreters, the chaplain, six artificers (carpenter, caulker, cooper, ropemaker, armourer, and cook) and perhaps ten servants.<sup>13</sup> Da Gama strove to find the best men available for his crews, and D. Manuel had allowed him to choose from among “the best and most skillful pilots and mariners in Portugal.” During the spring of 1497, da Gama spent a good deal of time with his men, encouraging them to improve their nautical skills. For those who did he increased their pay by two-fifths. According to Duarte Pacheco Pereira, “they received, besides other favors, pay higher than that of any seamen of other countries.”<sup>14</sup> D. Manuel and da Gama were both clearly determined to give the expedition every chance of success.

During these months, da Gama also spent a good deal of time arranging for the maps, charts, and instruments he would need for the voyage. In this task, he was greatly assisted by the accumulated knowledge of previous Portuguese voyages dating to the days of Prince Henry. A vast store of maps, charts, rutters, and letters was available in Lisbon, most carefully guarded in the *Casa da Mina*. According to Barros, this wealth of documentation included reports brought to Lisbon by an Abyssinian priest, Lucas Marcos in 1490. Marcos’s reports may have included the ‘famous’ letter from Cairo of Pedro de Covilhã. If so, da Gama would have possessed at least a rudimentary knowledge of the trading system of the Indian Ocean basin and the major political powers and ports on the

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Góis PI C.XLIV (97) and Castanheda LI C.XXIX (70–71), Correia *The Three Voyages*, p. 38; and Barros DI C.II (134).

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the various estimates and composition of the crews, cf. Adão da Fonseca, *Vasco da Gama*, pp. 85–93.

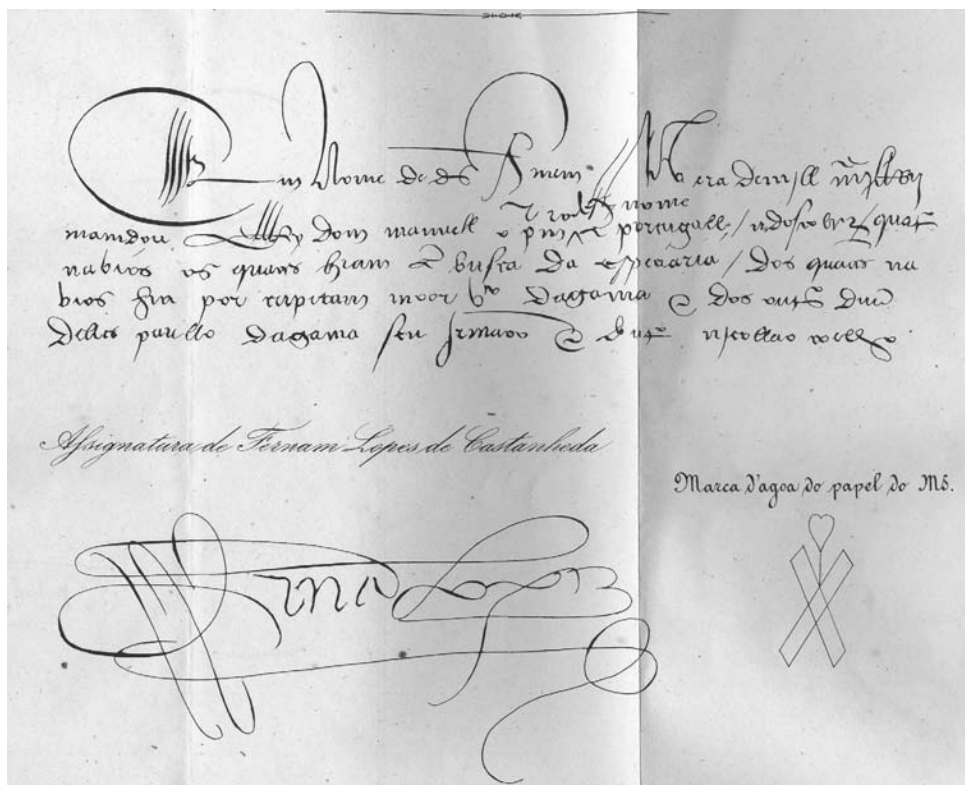
<sup>14</sup> *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* LIV C2 (198).

east coast of Africa and the western coast of India upon his departure. To assist da Gama and his pilots in navigation, a store of compasses, at least two astrolabes, and quadrants were loaded aboard the ships. There had been references to the compass as early as the 12th century in Europe, with most crediting its 'invention' to the Italians. In the *Journal*, for example, it is referred to as the *genoisca* or Genoese needle. The compass cards of da Gama's day were vastly different from today. Given high illiteracy rates, instead of number and letters on these cards, the points were given in different shapes or colors radiating from the pivot point in the center. The Portuguese called the cards the *rosa dos ventos* or 'rose of the wind.' Although portable time pieces were being produced in early 15th century Germany, they were not particularly reliable and da Gama's fleet kept time using large (1 hour) and small (30 minutes) hourglasses. Each time the ship's boy turned the glass a bell was rung. Eight bells with the small glass equaled four hours, the standard time for one watch. The astrolabe (in Arabic *asthar-lab* or 'to take a star') had also proven of great value to the Portuguese on their voyages of discovery. This instrument was essentially a flat wooden or brass circle etched along the edges in degrees and minutes with two sights for reading celestial bodies. Used in conjunction with tables of declination provided in works like Zacuto's *Almanach Perpetuum Celestium*, the astrolabe could provide fairly accurate readings of latitude. One last bit of cargo was far heavier than these instruments: D. Manuel ordered three stone *padroes* with the royal crest of Portugal be embarked. These large stone monuments, similar to those erected along the African coast by Diogo Cão and Dias, were named the 'São Gabriel,' the 'São Rafael,' and the 'Santa Maria.' As we will see, da Gama would erect them to signal further conquests for the Portuguese Crown.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For the chronicler's accounts on the preparations of the fleet, cf. Barros DI C.I (129–33); Castanheda LI C.II (8–12); Góis PI C.XXXV (67–68); Correia, *The Three Voyages* pp. 32–43, and Duarte Pacheco Pereira, *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* LIV C2 (197–99). For a concise overview of technological aspects of the voyage, cf. Fidelino de Figuerido, "The Geographical Discoveries and Conquests of the Portuguese," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* VI: 1–3 (1926), pp. 47–70.





3. Facsimile of the manuscript from Alexander Herculano's second edition of the *Roteiro* (1861).

### *The Manuscript*

The manuscript upon which this *Journal* is based is a copy made of the original document during the first half of the 16th century.<sup>16</sup> It is significant that although all of the major chroniclers of the early phases of Portuguese expansion to Asia including João de Barros, Damião

<sup>16</sup> Kopke, *Roteiro* p. xix had initially suggested that Fernão Lopes de Castanheda had made this early 16th century copy of the original manuscript. The fact that Castanheda spent two decades as apparitor and archivist at the University of Coimbra certainly lends credence to this view. Herculano, however, in his edition of the *Roteiro* p. xii cautioned against definitively accepting this view. There is, however, no doubt that the manuscript furnished the documentary basis for Castanheda's version of Da Gama's first voyage given in his *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India*.

Góis, and especially Fernão Lopes de Castanheda probably made use of its contents, and the published works that they produced during the mid-16th century enjoyed such success that the manuscript was never published. Instead, it languished, gathering dust for three centuries, before it was discovered in 1834 at the Convent of the Holy Cross in Coimbra by one of the preeminent Portuguese historians of that period, Alexandre Herculano. Herculano took the manuscript with him to his place of employment at that time, the Public Library of Porto, as Ms. 804 in that rich collection. In 1838, four years after reaching Porto, a first published edition was produced by Diogo Kopke and António da Costa Paiva.<sup>17</sup> But Herculano was not finished with his notable discovery. Not satisfied with the first edition, he oversaw the production of the second Portuguese edition in 1861.<sup>18</sup> Since then, at least nine other Portuguese editions of the work have appeared.<sup>19</sup>

### *Debate on Authorship*

Since the discovery of the manuscript copy in 1834, the most highly debated topic related to this *Journal* has focused around the question of who wrote this unique document on Vasco da Gama's first voyage to India. Unfortunately, the surviving copy found by Herculano had no title page or other autograph which identified its author.<sup>20</sup> The manuscript was anonymous either by fate or design.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, this unalterable reality has not prevented historians since that time from seeking to divine the author based on the extant contemporary and near contemporary historical evidence. Kopke began this process with an elaborate game of elimination involving the 39 men of the fleet whose names are known. He did this based on the following established facts. (1) The author sailed aboard the *São Rafael* for most of the voyage. Thus,

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<sup>17</sup> *Roteiro da Viagem que em Descobrimento da Índia pelo Cabo da Boa Esperança fez Dom Vasco da Gama em 1497* (Porto, 1838).

<sup>18</sup> *Roteiro da Viagem de Vasco da Gama em MCCCCXCVIII* (Lisbon, 1861).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. section I of the Bibliography.

<sup>20</sup> Subsequent notations had been made on the outside leafs of the manuscript. On the first leaf there is an inscription *Pertinet ad usum fratris Theotonii de Sancto G... Canonici Regularis in Cenobio Sete Crucis* and below this *Dô Theotonio*.

<sup>21</sup> At some point an archivist had written near the bottom of the front sheet *Descobrimeto da Índia por D. Vasco da Gamma*. This inscription had led certain bibliographers to mistakenly assume that Da Gama himself had published an account of the voyage. Cf. Kopke, *Roteiro*, pp. ix–xiv.

Gonçalo Alvares and Diogo Dias, the pilot and scribe of the *São Gabriel*, could be excluded from consideration. (2) The author was *not* one of the other people mentioned by name in the manuscript. Vasco and Paulo da Gama, Nicolau Coelho, Pêro de Alenquer, João de Coimbra, Martin Afonso, Sancho Meixa, and Fernão Veloso could thus also be excluded from consideration. (3) The author was *not* one of the three members of the expedition who are named as having died on the voyage. These unfortunates included Pedro de Covilhã, a priest, and the brothers Pedro and Francisco de Faria e Figueredo. (4) The author was *not* one of the *degredados* or convict-exiles mentioned by Gaspar Correia and others. Damião Rodrigues, João Machado, Pêro Dias, João Nunes, and Pêro Esteves therefore could also be removed from consideration. (5) The author *was* one of the thirteen people who accompanied Vasco da Gama on his initial visit to the Samorin of Calicut on 28 May 1498. Of the remaining 11 named men of the expedition, only four are known to have accompanied da Gama on this historic visit: João de Sá, Álvaro Velho, João Palha and João de Setubal.

Based on this process and generally accepted facts, two candidates have traditionally been identified as the possible author of the manuscript: Álvaro Velho and João de Sá. Of the two, Velho has long been the leading choice of historians, with several scholars definitively declaring that he was indeed the author.<sup>22</sup> Why? Kopke, for two reasons, initially argued that the author must be of humble origins, a common soldier or sailor aboard the fleet. He did this first, because of the common usage of the term “us others” or “we others” throughout the text, which in his view reflected the stark social distinction existing between himself and the officers of the fleet like Vasco da Gama, from the minor nobility, and other “men of distinction.” Second, Kopke argued that the literary style of the *Journal* fell far below that of the chroniclers of that period and other well educated men. Velho was a common soldier from the town of Barreiro in the environs of Lisbon and thus fit both these criteria. The comparison of Malindi to Alhocete, a town close to Barreiro by the author [p. 68] also figured prominently in this schema. More importantly, the *Journal* ends abruptly in late April 1499 off the Rio Grande on the west African coast, and there is some evidence that

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<sup>22</sup> For example, A. Fontoura da Costa, *Roteiro da Primeira Viagem de Vasco da Gama (1497–1499) por Álvaro Velho* (Lisbon, 1969). Cf. also Sergio Mascarenhas, “The Authorship of the Information on the First Portuguese Fleet to India,” in Fatima da Silva Gracias, Celsa Pinto, and Charles Borges (eds.), *Indo-Portuguese History—Global Trends* (Goa, 2005), pp. 441–456.

Álvaro Velho may have spent the next few years living in Portuguese outposts along the Guinea coast before returning to Lisbon. In the manuscript of Valentim Fernandes, a Moravian author and printer living in Portugal at that time, there is a reference which suggests that Velho had indeed lived in Africa and later described da Gama's voyage in detail to him in 1507.<sup>23</sup>

If we accept the veracity of this reference then this is indeed strong evidence for the authorship debate. Nevertheless, there are still problems with the case for Velho's authorship. First, we must accept the fundamental fact that the Álvaro Velho of 1500 in Guinea and 1507 in Lisbon or Tomar, where Fernandes lived from 1505 to 1511, was indeed the same man who accompanied da Gama on his first voyage. Second, given literacy rates in late medieval and early modern Europe, it is somewhat problematic to accept that a common soldier or sailor would have been literate enough to compile such a document. While the style, syntax and vocabulary are far from the level of the leading humanist chroniclers of the period, the document certainly reflects a fluency in language and grammar in Portuguese with periodic Latin abbreviations which belie the educational background of many common sailors or soldiers of that period. Moreover, Valentim Fernandes at this time was in the midst of compiling his manuscript on the Portuguese discoveries and was obviously seeking to give it as much legitimacy as possible, and therefore may have exaggerated his connection with Velho and the author of the "document." Moreover, while 'Velho' may have disembarked off the Rio Grande, thus explaining the abrupt end of the document, it is fair to ask why any of the remaining members of this expedition would choose to do so when the honors, glory, and rewards of their success soon awaited them? The answer that has been proposed to this seeming enigma is that Velho may have been a *degradado* as well, and forced to remain in Guinea to serve out his sentence. But if this is so, why was he never described as a convict exile by the chroniclers of the fleet?<sup>24</sup> Finally, the relevance of the Alchocete comparison for establishing Velho may also be exaggerated. After all,

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<sup>23</sup> This manuscript is currently found in the *Staatsbibliothek* in Munich. For a discussion of this evidence, cf. José Manuel Garcia, *Ao encontro dos Descobrimentos* (Lisbon, 1994), pp. 152–154, and José Pedro Machado and Viriato Campos, *Vasco da Gama e a sua viagem de Descobrimento* (Lisbon, 1969).

<sup>24</sup> Correia in his *Lendas da Índia*, however, does refer to a "note book that came into his hands and that was authored by a *degradado* who accompanied Vasco da Gama in his voyage of discovery." But he does not name him. Cf. *Lendas da Índia*, edited by Lello and Irmão (4 vols., Porto, 1975), III: 8.

Alchocete was the birthplace of king D. Manuel I, and the attempt to curry favor with this monarch by referring to it in the manuscript was probably far more decisive in its selection by the author than its proximity to Barreiro.

As the *escrivão* or scribe of the *São Rafael*, João de Sá seems eminently more logical as the author of this *Journal*. Sá would have possessed the requisite skills for compiling the document, and his duties aboard this ship would have included assisting with the log or *diário do bordo* of the voyage. Sá was also a man of high standing within the fleet, and trusted by Vasco da Gama. In fact, near the end of the voyage when da Gama put into the Azores with his fatally ill brother Paulo he gave command of the *São Gabriel* to de Sá who captained her back to Lisbon successfully by the end of August 1499. This position of trust with da Gama, and his standing in the fleet would have afforded de Sá access not only to the first audience with the Samorin, but to all of the events regarding the fleet that the author of the *Journal* describes in such detail. Whether Velho as a common soldier would have enjoyed this degree of access is far from certain. So why has Velho traditionally been favored in the debate? The principal reason lies with a few sentences in the chronicle of Castanheda where he describes an exchange between Vasco da Gama and João de Sá on their initial visit in Calicut to a Hindu temple. According to Castanheda, de Sá “who was dubious about whether that church was indeed Christian” knelt next to Vasco da Gama and said “if this is the devil, I worship the true God.” The Captain-major then smiled.<sup>25</sup> Since the author of the *Journal* never doubted in his written description that the Hindus they encountered were indeed Christian, and de Sá certainly did, then he could not be the author of the document. But is it as simple as that?

Even if we accept Castanheda’s story, it is still not enough to exclude João de Sá definitively as the author of the *Journal*. After all, a careful reading of this document and the other extant sources on the fleet suggest that there was an ‘official’ version of events that Vasco da Gama and the leadership wanted presented in both their logs and in any other accounts or diaries kept by members of the expedition which have long since disappeared. This surviving *Journal* certainly seems to conform to that dictum. For example, it seems logical by the time the Portuguese

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Castanheda LI C. XVI (44–45).

first visited this Hindu temple in Calicut in late May 1498 that there were already serious doubts as to whether these Indian “Christians” were indeed Christian. But for nearly a century, the Portuguese had traversed the Atlantic and then the Indian Ocean in search of Christians and Prester John to outflank the rising power of Islam. King D. Manuel wanted Vasco da Gama to find such Christians. As a loyal servant, an astute commander, and a man dedicated to improving the social and economic position of his person and his ‘house’, da Gama was determined to find such Christians “beyond the land of the Moors.” In his official reports to the king after his return, in his own log or diary if he indeed kept one on the voyage, as well as in this *Journal* of the voyage, da Gama and his minions were determined to describe the Indians they encountered as Christians and nothing else.

But is this what the Portuguese aboard the fleet truly believed? After all, these hundred or so men spent two years together sailing more than 20,000 miles in very tight quarters. Thus, there was more than adequate time to discuss such matters, and in conversation with his officers, da Gama must have known and admitted the truth. Non-Muslims certainly; potential allies against Islam possibly; but Christians, even long lapsed and isolated ones at that, most probably not. So, the story in the temple related by Castanheda proves nothing more than both João de Sá and Vasco da Gama already knew that the Indians were not Christians. On this issue, it is significant, as we will see, that after holding masses at various points along the African coast on the voyage to India, the Portuguese *never* sought to hold mass in Calicut during their three month stay there. If da Gama and his men truly believed that the Indians were Christian why not celebrate the mass with them? It is also significant that Vasco da Gama *smiled* when he heard this statement from de Sá in the Hindu temple. If he indeed believed that this had been a Christian church, he would have rebuked the *escrivão* for such skepticism. But he did not. Nevertheless, in the official accounts of the voyage that were destined for the king’s eye there could be no such admission or joking. The serious business of social advancement for all concerned mandated such a stance, and it is clear that all concerned were willing to embrace this stance for their individual and collective benefit.

That the author of the *Journal* subscribed to this intellectual “conspiracy” is also established by his treatment of other issues during the voyage. For example, in their initial interaction with the Nguni in the Cape region in early December 1488 when Vasco da Gama initially

considered using force the author twice within a single paragraph [p. 42] went to great lengths to establish the peaceful intentions of the Portuguese. Although the Captain had ordered heavily armed men landed, he had done so merely "to show them we were powerful and could do them harm, although we had no desire to do so." Da Gama had then ordered his cannon fired only "to prove that we were able to do them harm, although we did not wish to do so." Moreover, while Muslims were routinely tortured on the voyage with impunity, the Christian 'captive' later known as Gaspar da Gama who joined the fleet on Anjediva island during the return voyage was merely "questioned." The author's version of events [p. 105] is certainly at variance with the other chronicler accounts, especially Barros who clearly states that he was tortured as well.<sup>26</sup> It is not clear if this euphemism was adopted by our author since the man was a Christian or more probably because Gaspar da Gama soon achieved a place of prominence first aboard the return voyage to Lisbon and later at court and with king D. Manuel I.

Finally, Correia in his *Lendas da India*, asserted that Vasco da Gama, like many of his contemporaries, had to deal with increasing dissension in the South Atlantic on the long ocean leg to the Cape of Good Hope and then an open mutiny immediately after rounding the Cape. While Correia's version of events certainly differs on many points with the other chronicler accounts and this episode has been generally dismissed by historians, it is indeed possible that such events may have taken place. After all they were commonplace on the expeditions of the period which in turn created the need for commanders who could be harsh when such occasions arose, and Vasco da Gama certainly possessed these traits. If these events took place as Correia describes, it is significant that our author, in any effort to sanitize his account intentionally omitted collaborating references to such events which would have somehow tarnished the legend of the voyage. After all it is strange that the *Journal* is virtually silent on the three month South Atlantic passage when these troubles supposedly began, with less than two hundred words devoted to the period August-November 1497. While some may argue that this dearth of information was tied to the traditional Portuguese desire to protect the secrets of the Cape route, it is also possible that this sparse treatment was also tied to not altogether laudable events aboard the ships during these months.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Cf., Barros DI C.XI (172).

<sup>27</sup> On the supposed mutiny, cf. Cf. Correia, *The Three Voyages*, pp. 50–64.

In the final analysis, therefore, both Álvaro Velho and João de Sá have factors in their favor and which weigh against them in the longstanding authorship debate. At the same time, there is the very real possibility that neither of these men was indeed the author of this *Journal*. After all, the names of only 39 of the ca. 170 men of the fleet have ever been established. Moreover, we know the names of only 8 of the 13 men who accompanied Vasco da Gama on his initial visit to the Samorin of Calicut in late May 1498. One of these unknown companions of the Captain Major may have also been the author. While the author of the *Journal* may therefore never be definitively established, it is more certain that the man who wrote it certainly subscribed the 'official' version of the events on the voyage that both Vasco da Gama and his officers would have desired and expected from their subordinates. This was an account of their exploits which their sovereign and their countrymen could embrace. It was this version of events which would eventually be lionized in the heroic decasyllables and stanzas of Luís Vaz Camões.

### *Significance*

Sir Richard Burton, with typical Victorian aplomb, may have dismissed this *Journal* as being "written in a rude, uncultivated style," but the author, whether Velho, de Sá or one of their unnamed colleagues, compiled a remarkable document.<sup>28</sup> For historians of the early phases of Portuguese expansion to Asia, the *Journal* presents a microcosm of the issues and realities that would dominate the next three decades. The main outlines of the sea route to India, the entrenched power of Islam along the east African coast, the tumultuous relations with entrenched Muslim power in the Indian Ocean trade, a concise description of the products and prices in the Asian trade, and the details of the cultural interaction of the Portuguese with the various peoples of littoral Africa and India are all to be found within its passages. Not content with the rich descriptions provided throughout the main text of the *Journal* the author, most probably with the assistance of Gaspar da Gama on the return voyage, also painstakingly compiled a list of some of the major kingdoms in the Indian Ocean basin that was appended to the manuscript. In doing so, he furnished information that was judged most

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Camoens: His Life and His Lusiads, A Commentary* (2 vols., London, 1881), II: 386.



crucial for subsequent Portuguese fleets and imperial efforts: the most lucrative trading products, the price structure, the military prowess, as well as the religion of the rulers of these kingdoms. The *Journal* is also the earliest Portuguese firsthand eyewitness account extant on the voyages of discovery.<sup>29</sup> While its literary style may not approach the pinnacle of erudition found in João de Barros and others of this period it nevertheless conveys an impressive description and insights into the first European contact by sea with various cultures of the Indian Ocean littoral. For this reason alone it stands as a unique testament to that seminal age in history.

### *Ravenstein's First English Edition*

To bolster the case that especially in the English speaking world the significance and importance of Vasco da Gama's voyage has traditionally paled in comparison to the attention which has been languished upon the voyage of Columbus, we need only consider that in the two centuries since the discovery of the *Journal* manuscript only a single English translation of it has appeared. At the height of the British Empire, and concurrently the halcyon days of the Hakluyt Society in London, Burton, despite his reservations on its "rude" style and the lowborn status of its author, had recommended it for translation to this scholarly organization. Seven years later, in 1898, the first and only English edition appeared. Interestingly enough, this sole English edited translation was not compiled by Burton, who had already admirably demonstrated his fluency with Portuguese by publishing four volumes of translation and commentary on the *Lusiads* of Camões by that time.<sup>30</sup> In fact, this sole English translation was not even compiled by a native English speaker. Rather, it was the work of the polyglot Ernst Georg Ravenstein, a German expatriate living and prospering in the bosom of Victorian England.

<sup>29</sup> On this point, cf. Malyn D.D. Newitt, "Vasco da Gama in East Africa in 1498" *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in History Archaeology*, Vol. II, No. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Os Lusíadas (The Lusiads) Englished by Richard Francis Burton*. Edited by Isabel Burton (2 vols., London, 1880) and *Camões: His Life and His Lusiads, A Commentary*. For Burton's initial interaction with Portuguese and Indo-Portuguese history cf. his first published work *Goa, and the Blue Mountains; or Six Months of Sick Leave* (London, 1851).

Ravenstein had been born in Frankfurt am Main in 1834 into a well known academic family. His father, August Ravenstein was a noted cartographer, who no doubt encouraged his sons' interest in this field. After training at the Frankfurt gymnasium and the Städel'sche Institut in cartography and geography, the eighteen year old Ravenstein emigrated to London in 1852, where he would spend most of the next six decades. Once there, he completed his studies under the eminent geographer August Petermann. From 1855 to 1872, Ravenstein worked for the Topographical Department of the War Office. After retiring, he spent the next thirty-five years consolidating his position as one of the most eminent geographers and cartographers in Europe. Reflecting that status within the Victorians academic establishment, he became a member of the Royal Geographical Society, the Hakluyt Society, the British Association, and the Royal Statistical Society among others. He was also a corresponding member of the Royal Geographical Societies of Scotland, Germany, Portugal, and Amsterdam. During these years he compiled his *Map of Eastern Equatorial Africa* (1881–1883), one of the most impressive cartographic works of the 19th century. He also published groundbreaking articles on migration studies.<sup>31</sup>

It is not entirely clear when and how Ravenstein attained his fluency in the Portuguese language. Moreover, the amount of time he spent researching in the main Lisbon archives during his career is also something of a mystery.<sup>32</sup> His interest in the history of the Portuguese expansion most probably grew out of his research on east Africa. By

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Sanford H. Bederman, "The Royal Geographical Society, E.G. Ravenstein, and *A Map of Eastern Equatorial Africa, 1877–1883*" *Imago Mundi* 44 (1992), pp. 106–19, and for some of Ravenstein's own work: "The Laws of Migration" *Journal of the Statistical Society* 48 (1885), pp. 167–227; "The Laws of Migration" *Journal of the Statistical Society* 52 (1889), pp. 241–301; *A Life's Work: A Catalogue of Maps, Books, and Papers Drawn, composed of, written, 1853–1908* (London, 1908); and *Martin Behaim: His Life and His Globe* (London, 1908).

<sup>32</sup> As José Manuel Garcia pointed out in his introduction to a reprint of Ravenstein's edition (New Delhi, 1998), p. 6 n. 7, there are several inconsistencies in his citations of manuscript documents in the ANTT *Collecção de S. Vicente de Fora* involving various drafts of the royal letters from D. Manuel I sent out immediately following the return of the *Berrio* in July 1499 and included in his Appendix A, cf. *Journal*, pp. 111–16. It is clear, however, as Ravenstein admits on p. 111 that he was not utilizing the manuscript originals of these letters, but rather printed versions compiled by A.C. Teixeira de Aragão in the *Boletim* of the Lisbon Geographical Society VI (1886), p. 673; and in *Alguns Documentos do Archivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* (Lisbon, 1892), p. 95. It is also interesting to note that Ravenstein's citation of these letters is identical to Teixeira de Aragão in his *Vasco da Gama e a Vidigueira* (3rd Edition, Lisbon, 1898), pp. 218 n. 1.

the early 1890s, he was actively researching and writing on the early Portuguese voyages of discovery, including those of Diogo Cão and Bartolomeu Dias. By the mid-1890s he had extended this work to include work on the *Journal* of Vasco da Gama's first voyage. In 1897, Ravenstein presented a paper on Cão and Dias to the Toronto Meeting of the British Association which included a plethora of contemporary and near contemporary maps.<sup>33</sup> The following year, his English translation of the *Journal* was published for the Hakluyt Society incorporating some of these same maps.

Ravenstein's edition was an impressive piece of Victorian scholarship. In his preface, he provided a concise overview of the history of the manuscript and the major historiographical debates on its contents. His translation, with a few exceptions, was complete, accurate, and engaging. His editorial notes to the text, while generally brief, were well researched. He clearly devoted a good deal of his scholarly energies to the appendices. In fact these pages outnumber those devoted to the *Journal* itself in his edition.<sup>34</sup> In this section, Ravenstein provided translations of contemporary letters from D. Manuel and Girolamo Sernigi on the voyage, 17th century Portuguese accounts of the voyage by Luiz de Figueiredo Falcão and Pedro Barretto de Rezende, details on the ships and crews of the fleet, an overview of the voyage, a description of early maps depicting the voyage along with an analysis of the place names mentioned in the *Journal*, and a summary of the honors and awards bestowed on Vasco da Gama. All subsequent English editors of the *Journal* owe a huge debt of gratitude to the painstaking work of Ernst Georg Ravenstein.

That said, there are several reasons for producing a new English edition. First, the Victorian syntax and linguistic style of Ravenstein's translation is badly in need of revision for a modern readership. Every effort has been made to adopt a syntax and punctuation style that

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. "The Voyages of Diogo Cão and Bartholomeu Dias, 1482–1488" *The Geographical Journal* 16:6 (1900), pp. 625–55. It is significant that this work was also based exclusively on printed primary material and not manuscript sources available in Lisbon. On Ravenstein's career, cf. also David B. Grigg "Ernst Georg Ravenstein" in *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* edited by T.W. Freeman et al. (Mansell, 1977), I: 79–82; and several obituaries that appeared following his death in Hofheim in the Taunus mountains in March 1913, including *Geographical Journal* 41/5 (1913), pp. 497–98; and the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 45/6 (1913), pp. 453–54.

<sup>34</sup> In the *Journal*, pp. 1–108 contain the text of the manuscript, while pp. 111–237 contain the appendices.

renders the passages of the text more accessible to modern readers. Philosophically, Ravenstein's edition also conformed to the "seeds of empire" school of imperial historiography described most succinctly by M.N. Pearson.<sup>35</sup> As such, many of the fundamental assumptions on the nature of European, African, and Asiatic cultural interchange before, during, and immediately after da Gama's voyage that Ravenstein embraced in his analysis are also in need of revision. At the same time, over the past century, there has been a good deal of archival and secondary work on this period and da Gama's voyage of 1497–1499. The findings of this post-Ravenstein scholarship have been incorporated into the footnotes and appendices whenever possible.

### *Da Gama Departure*

To escape the summer heat of Lisbon, D. Manuel held court in early July 1497 in Montemor-o-Novo. Vasco da Gama and his officers were summoned to this town, dominated by an old Moorish castle, for their formal farewell. Barros wrote the best account we have of this meeting some sixty years later. It was indeed a solemn occasion. The formal audience chamber was "a mass of color and magnificence." D. Manuel declared "I, pondering much on what might be the most profitable and honorable enterprise, and one worthy of much glory in which I might undertake to carry out...I have come to the decision that no other is more proper for this my kingdom...than the search for India and the lands of the East." What did the king hope to achieve with this new conquest? "I hope that in the mercy of God that not only may the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ His son be proclaimed and received through our efforts, and that we may obtain the reward thereof—fame and praise among men—but in addition kingdoms and new states with much riches, wrested by force of arms from the hands of the barbarians." Why had he selected da Gama for this mission and crusade? "I have in my mind how Vasco da Gama, who is here present, has given a good account of himself in all matters which were entrusted to him, or with which

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. *The Age of Partnership* (Honolulu, 1979), pp. 3–4, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 4–6, and *Coastal Western India* (new Delhi, 1981), pp. xii–xvii, 19–20.

he was charged. I have chosen him for this journey, as a loyal cavalier, worthy of such an honorable enterprise.”

Da Gama then kissed the royal hand in thanks for this great honor, and the king presented him with a silken banner with the cross of the Order of Christ in the center. He then declared: “I Vasco da Gama, who now have been commanded by you most high and powerful king, my liege lord, to set out to discover the seas and lands of India and the Orient, do swear on the symbol of this cross, on which I lay my hands, that in the service of God and for you I shall uphold it and not surrender it in the sight of the Moor, pagan, or any race of people that I may encounter, and in the face of every peril of water, fire, or sword, always to defend and protect it, even unto death.” The Captain-major also swore to follow “with all fidelity, loyalty, watchfulness, and diligence,” the written orders given to him for the mission until the time when he could return “to this place where I now stand, in the presence of your Royal Highness, with the help of the grace of God, in whose service you are sending me.” At that point, da Gama received his formal instructions along with letters from D. Manuel to several of the rulers that might be encountered on the voyage, including Prester John of the Indies and the king of Calicut. The following day, a solemn mass was celebrated. Da Gama and his officers then departed by horse for Lisbon to meet up with their ships and crews.

On 7 July 1497, the four ships of the fleet lay at anchor off the suburb of Restelo, four miles west of the arsenal of Lisbon where the Tagus widens on its way to the Atlantic. On shore, Prince Henry had many years before ordered a small chapel dedicated to St. Mary of Bethlehem (Belém) built. It was common for Portuguese mariners to say their prayers for a safe and successful voyage in this chapel. On the night of 7 July, Vasco da Gama, his brother Paulo and his other officers arrived from Lisbon. They spent most of that night in that chapel with a priest from a nearby monastery confessing their sins and praying for strength to overcome the obstacles they would confront in this great enterprise. The next morning, a final mass was held. At this service, the priest, based on a bull of pope Martin V granted at the behest of Prince Henry, offered general confession and granted plenary absolution for their sins to any member of the fleet who would lose their lives in this “holy” venture. It was a colorful occasion: all of the officers and crews were in their formal clothing, the armor of the officers and soldiers was no doubt shining in the hot summer sun, and the ships

were flying every flag and pennon they possessed. "It appeared in no way like the sea, but like unto a field of flowers." In this setting, the final good-byes were said with family members with much emotion. According to Barros, the area in front of the chapel could have been called the "shore of tears." Da Gama and his crews boarded their ships, awaiting a favorable wind.



## THE VOYAGE

### *[The Voyage Begins]*

In the Name of God, Amen.

In the year 1497 the king Dom Manuel, the first of that name in Portugal, despatched four ships to make discoveries and search for spices. Vasco da Gama went as Captain major of these ships, Paulo da Gama his brother commanded one of them, and Nicolau Coelho another.<sup>1</sup>

### *[The Atlantic: Lisbon to the Cape of Good Hope]*

We departed from Restello<sup>2</sup> on a Saturday, the 8th day of July 1497, and began our voyage, which Our Lord God permit us to accomplish in his service, Amen.

We arrived first the following Saturday [15 July] in view of the Canaries, and that night we passed to the lee of Lancerote. The following night [16 July] we made Terra Alta at dawn, where we fished for two hours. That evening at dusk we found ourselves off the *Rio do Ouro*.

That night, the fog was so thick that Paulo da Gama lost sight of both the Captain major and the other ships. And even after day break [17 July] we caught sight of neither him nor the other vessels. So we shaped

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<sup>1</sup> These ships and their captains were the flagship *São Gabriel* (Vasco da Gama), the *São Rafael* (Paulo da Gama), the *Berio* (Nicolau Coelho), and an unnamed storeship (Gonçalo Nunes). The author of the *Journal* sailed aboard the *São Rafael*. For more details on the fleet, cf. Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> D. Manuel I would eventually build the impressive Monastery of Jeronimos on this site with the profits of the spice trade.

Lançarote or Lanzarote is the eastern most and fourth largest of the Canary islands found at 29°00' N, 13°40' W. To 15th century Portuguese navigators, *Terra Alta* was the name for the extensive low cliffs found along the African coast at 24°00 N latitude. Cf. Duarte Pacheco Pereira, *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*, p. 85. The 'River of Gold' here is not the Senegal river actually a large bay or basin extending ca. 20 miles inland and 4 miles wide at its mouth.



a course for the Cape Verde Islands, as we had been ordered to do, stating that in case we became separated we should follow this route.

On the following Sunday [23 July] at dawn we caught sight of the *Ilha do Sal*.<sup>3</sup> After another hour we sighted three ships, which we hailed. We found them to be the store ship and those of Nicolau Coelho and Bartolomeu Dias, who stayed in our company as far as Mina. They too had been separated from the Captain major.<sup>4</sup>

After joining up, we continued on our route. But we lost the wind, and were becalmed until Wednesday morning [26 July]. At ten o'clock, we sighted the Captain major, some five leagues ahead of us, and by evening succeeded in hailing him with great excitement. We celebrated finding him by firing off our bombards<sup>5</sup> and sounding the trumpets with much pleasure.

The following day, a Thursday [27 July], we reached the *Ilha de Santiago*, where we joyfully anchored off the beach of Santa Maria.<sup>6</sup>

From there we loaded meat, water, and wood, and did much needed repairs to our yards.

[From Santiago to the Bay of Saint Helena]

On a Thursday, the third of August, we departed sailing in an easterly direction. One day, heading south, the Captain major's main yard

<sup>3</sup> One of the *Barlavento* (Windward) northern islands of the Cape Verde archipelago found at 16°31' N latitude.

<sup>4</sup> The S. Jorge da Mina fort had been built on the Gold Coast of Africa to protect Portuguese imperial and commercial interests in that region on the orders of D. João II in 1482 by Diogo de Azambuja. Dias had served as one of the captains on this expedition and from 1487 to 1488 had commanded the first expedition to double the Cape of Good Hope for the Portuguese Crown. In recognition of such services he had been appointed captain of Mina and sailed there to take up this posting. Cf. Eric Axelson, *Congo to Cape: Early Portuguese Explorers* (New York, 1973), pp. 97–206.

<sup>5</sup> By the time of Da Gama's voyage, the term *bombardas*, which had originally referred to catapults or mortars, had been extended to any piece of military ordnance which propelled large stones or iron balls.

<sup>6</sup> Santiago, one of the southern *Sotavento* (leeward) island group, is the largest in the Cape Verde archipelago. The *praia* or beach of Santa Maria is also known as the *porto da praia* and is found at 14°55' N and 23°31' W.

broke. This happened on the 18th of August, about 200 leagues from the *Ilha de Santiago*. We then lay to under foresail and lower mainsail for 2 days and a night. On the 22nd of that month, sailing S by SW, we saw many birds resembling herons.<sup>7</sup> As night approached, they flew vigorously to the SSE, like birds heading for land. On this same day we saw a whale, some 800 leagues out to sea.<sup>8</sup>

On the eve of St. Simon and St. Jude, Friday, the 27th of October, we saw many whales, some called *quoquas*<sup>9</sup> and seals.

On Wednesday, the 1st of November, All Saint's Day, we discerned many signs of land, among them gulf-weed [*gólfãos*] which grows along the coast.<sup>10</sup>

On the 4th of that same month [November], a Saturday, two hours before daybreak, we took soundings of 110 fathoms. At 9 o'clock we sighted land. We all drew together and saluted the Captain major, with many flags, standards, and firing our bombards. All of us dressed in our finest clothes. That same day, we tacked to come close to land but since we could not identify it we again stood out to sea.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Garções* in the manuscript. This word may be an augmentative of *garça* or heron. Cf. Herculano, *Roteiro*, p. 136. However, the author may have also used this term in place of *gaivotões* or large seagulls that are more common in this area. Cf. A. Fontoura da Costa, *Roteiro*, p. 105 n. 10.

<sup>8</sup> At the time of Bartolomeu Dias and Da Gama, Portuguese mariners and cartographers used  $16\frac{2}{3}$  leagues to the degree. Therefore the league equaled 3 and  $\frac{3}{5}$  nautical miles (6.66 km) or 4.14 standard miles.

<sup>9</sup> Although this term has generally been identified with *foca* or seal, *lobo marinho* or sea-wolf is used throughout the manuscript for seals. In the present context, it is more likely that the term is referring to *cachalotes* or sperm whales. Cf. Jose Pedro Machado e Viriato Campos, "Relato directo da viagem de descobrimento do caminho maritime para a Índia" in *Vasco da Gama e a Sua Viagem de Descobrimento* (Lisbon, 1969).

<sup>10</sup> These aquatic plants may have been *sargassum* also called gulf-weed, known to Portuguese navigators of this period. The term may have also been generically applied by the author of the *Journal* for *zostera* or eel grass which is common along the south west coast of Africa. Cf. Herculano, *Roteiro*, p. 136, and Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 4 n. 5.

<sup>11</sup> It is unfortunate that the author included so few details on this epic 95 day sea passage of the fleet in the South Atlantic from Santiago to the Bay of Saint Helena, a distance of ca. 1200 leagues or 4300 miles. One explanation is certainly the desire of the Portuguese to keep such valuable navigational knowledge secret from potential rivals. Ravenstein questioned the veracity of the dates in this section. On this passage the fleet averaged 12 leagues or 45 miles a day. It was thus clearly impossible to cover more than 300 leagues between the 18th and the 22 August 1497. It is more likely that

*[Saint Helena Bay]*

On Tuesday [7 November] we returned to shore and saw low lying land which contained a large bay. The Captain major sent Pedro d'Alenquer in a boat to take soundings to find a good anchorage. He found the bay to be very good and clean and sheltered from all winds, save those from the NW, as lies east and west. We named this bay Santa Helena.<sup>12</sup>

On Wednesday [8 November] we dropped anchor in this bay, where we remained for 8 days, careening the ships, mending the sails, and taking on wood.

Four leagues from this anchorage to the SE a river coming from the interior enters the bay. It is about a stone's throw across at the mouth, and from 2–3 fathoms deep at all stages of the tide. We called it the *rio de Santiago*.<sup>13</sup>

In this land the inhabitants are tawny colored.<sup>14</sup> They eat only seals and whales and the meat of gazelles and the roots of plants. They dress in skins, and wear sheaths over their natural parts. Their weapons are poles of olive wood to which a horn, browned in the fire, is attached. They have many dogs like those in Portugal, which bark the same as well. The birds of this land are also like those in Portugal: cormorants, gulls, turtle doves, crested larks, and many others. The country has a healthy and temperate climate and good vegetation.

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instead of 'on the 22nd of that month' we should read 'on the 22nd of October.' The Portuguese fathom (*braça*) made up of 10 *palmas* equaled approximately 7.21 feet.

<sup>12</sup> Saint Helena of Constantinople (ca. 250–330 AD), mother of the Emperor Constantine and traditionally credited with finding the relics of the 'True Cross.' Saint Helena bay is found at 33°44' S 18°00' E. The chroniclers Castanheda LI C. II (10) and Góis LI C. XXXV (68) both stated that Nicolau Coelho was instead sent by Da Gama to take these soundings. Ravenstein endorsed this view, while Kopke and Herculano argued that it was indeed Alenquer as stated in the manuscript. While Coelho more commonly performed this function as the voyage progressed, it seems more likely that at this stage, Alenquer, based on his earlier voyage with Dias, would have been the more logical choice.

<sup>13</sup> The Berg River or Great Berg River, enters the Atlantic 60 km north of Cape Town in the Western Cape Province of South Africa.

<sup>14</sup> *Homens baços* from the Latin *opacus* for dark, shaded.

On the day after we anchored, that is to say Thursday [9 November], we went to shore with the Captain major. We captured one of the men of that land, who was small of stature like Sancho Mexia. He had been gathering honey in the sandy waste, because the bees of this country deposit their honey at the foot of the mounds around the bushes. We brought him to the Captain major's ship, and placed him at the table and whatever we ate he ate as well.

On the following day [10 November] the Captain major had him well dressed and sent ashore.<sup>15</sup>

On the following day [11 November], 14 or 15 of them came to where we had anchored our ships.<sup>16</sup> The Captain major landed and showed them a wide variety of merchandise in order to find out if such things were found in their country. These products included cinnamon, cloves, seed pearls, gold, and many other things. But they had no knowledge whatsoever of such goods, and acted like men who had never seen them before. They were consequently given round bells and tin rings by the Captain major. These events transpired on a Friday [10 November]; and the same thing took place on Saturday [11 November] as well.

On Sunday [12 November] about 40 or 50 of them appeared. After dining we landed and exchanged the *çeitils* we carried for shells which they wore as ornaments in their ears, and which appeared as if they had been plated, and foxtails attached to a handle, with which they fanned their faces. At that time, I purchased a sheath that one of them wore over his member for 1 *çetil*; by which it appeared to us that they highly valued copper, indeed they wore small beads of it in their ears.<sup>17</sup>

That same day Fernão Velloso who was with the Captain major greatly desired to accompany them to their houses in order to find out how they

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<sup>15</sup> According to Barros, DI C. II (135–136) Da Gama landed at this time to fix the fleet's latitude at Saint Helena bay.

<sup>16</sup> It appears that either the author or copyist made an error here, since the events of 10 November had already been described. This line should probably read 'And on that day...'

<sup>17</sup> The *çetil* was a copper coin first struck by D. João I (1385–1433) with a value of one-sixth *real* and adorned with a three towered castle. The coin's name came from the North African city of Ceuta taken by D. João I in 1415. It was minted there as well as in Lisbon and Porto.

lived, what they ate, and what their life was like. He asked permission from the Captain major to give him license to go with them. The Captain yielded to his importunities, and allowed him to accompany them to their houses. We returned to the Captain major's ship for supper, while he went with the blacks. Soon after they left us, they captured a seal. When they came to the foot of a hill on a moor they roasted the seal. They gave some of it to Fernão Velloso who was still with them, and some of the plant's roots which they ate as well. After finishing this meal they told him that he should return to the ships; as they did not wish him to go further with them.

When Fernão Velloso came abreast of the ships he began to shout, while they remained in the bush. Meanwhile, we were still at supper. But when we heard him, the captains stopped eating at once, and the rest of us as well. We promptly embarked in a sailing boat, and the blacks began to run along the beach, and they came up on Fernão Velloso just as we did. As we tried to get him into the boat, they began to throw the assegais they carried, and the Captain major and 3 or 4 others were wounded. This all happened because we trusted them. For it seemed to us that they were men of little courage and that they would never dare to do what they had done. Because of this we had gone ashore without weapons. We then returned to the ships.<sup>18</sup>

*[Doubling the Cape of Good Hope]*

As soon as we had prepared and careened our ships and taken on wood, we departed from this place, on the morning of Thursday, the 16th of November. We did not know exactly how far we were from the Cape of Good Hope, save for Pero de Alenquer saying that at most we were 30 leagues abaft the Cape.<sup>19</sup> But he could not be sure. Because on his return voyage [with Dias] he left the Cape in the morning and had passed by there with the wind astern, while on the outward voyage he

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<sup>18</sup> According to Barros DI C. II (136), Paulo da Gama interceded on Velloso's behalf with his brother so that he might accompany the Kholkoi. In addition to Vasco da Gama, Gonçalo Álvares, master of the *São Gabriel* was also wounded in this attack.

<sup>19</sup> According to Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 9 n. 1, the actual distance is 33 leagues. Abaft is a nautical term meaning behind a given part of a ship or behind the mid-point of a group of ships.

had stayed out to sea. He was thus unable to recognize exactly where we were. We therefore stood out to sea toward the SSW, and Saturday evening [18 November] we beheld the Cape of Good Hope.

On that same day we again stood out to sea, returning to land during the night. Sunday morning, the 19th of November, we once more made for the Cape. But again, we were unable to double it, since the wind was SSE while the Cape lies NE–SW. That day we again stood out to sea, returning to land on Monday night. Finally, at noon on Wednesday we passed by the Cape with the wind astern. We then cruised along the coast.<sup>20</sup>

Close to this Cape of Good Hope to the south lies a vast bay, six leagues wide at its mouth, which enters another six into the land.<sup>21</sup>

*[The Bay of São Brás]*

Saturday evening, the 25th of November, the day of St. Catherine, we entered the bay of São Brás. We remained there for 13 days, since we broke up the ship which carried our provisions and divided them up among the other ships.<sup>22</sup>

The following Friday [1 December], while still in the bay of São Brás about 90 tawny colored men resembling those at St. Helena Bay appeared. Some walked along the beach, while the others remained up

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<sup>20</sup> The chronicler accounts vary on the exact date the Cape of Good Hope was doubled. Castanheda LI C. III (12) wrote Wednesday, the 20th of November <sup>20</sup> while Barros stated Tuesday, the “20th”. But Wednesday was the 22nd and Tuesday the 21st of that month.

<sup>21</sup> Dias and Alenquer had visited this large and well protected bay found at 34°6′ S 18°49′ E on their return voyage in 1488. On the 1489 map of Henricus Martellus Germanus (British Museum Additional Mss. 15760) it is called the *Golfo Ant.o delle Serre*. The traditional name in English is False Bay.

<sup>22</sup> The fleet remained here from 25 November through 7 December 1498. The *angra de São Braz* was probably the bay or anchorage *dos Vaqueiros* described by Dias in 1488. Vasco da Gama evidently gave it the name São Brás since Dias had ‘discovered’ it on 3 February, the feast day of St. Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia, martyred in 316. It was renamed *Mosselbaai* by the Dutch navigator Paulus van Caerden in 1601 for the abundant mussels found there, later Anglicized to Mossel Bay, the name it is known by today. According to Castanheda LI C. II (13) and Gois PI C. XXXV (71) the fleet’s storeship was burned here.

on the hills. All, or at least most of us, were at that time on the Captain major's ship. As soon as we saw them, we went ashore in the boats, which were well armed. As we approached shore, the Captain major threw little round bells on the beach, and they picked them up. They not only took the ones he threw them, but they even approached us and took some from the Captain major's hands. This act surprised us greatly. Because when Bartomoleu Dias was here, they fled from him and would not take any of the things he tried to give them. Moreover, when he was taking water from a watering hole, which is very good here and close to the beach, they sought to prevent this. They pelted him with stones from atop a hill overlooking that spot. Bartolomeu Dias shot at them with a crossbow and killed one of them. And so we assumed that they did not flee from us because they had heard news from the bay of St. Helena, where we had been earlier, which is only sixty leagues from place to place by sea, saying that we were men who would not do harm and that we even gave away things which were ours.<sup>23</sup>

The Captain major did not want to disembark at this spot, because there was much bush where the blacks were waiting. Instead he proceeded to an open part of the beach, and landed there. We then signaled the blacks to approach us, and this they did. The Captain major and the other captains had landed with armed men, some of whom carried crossbows. By signs, the Captain major ordered them to disperse, and to approach him only alone or in pairs. To those who approached, he gave small bells and red caps. In return they gave us ivory bracelets, which they wore on their arms. Because of this, it appears to us that there are many elephants in this country. We even found some of their dung close to the watering hole where they had come to drink.

On Saturday [2 December] about 200 blacks, both young and old, appeared. They brought about a dozen livestock, both oxen and cows, and 4 or 5 sheep. As soon as we saw them, we went to shore. They promptly began to play 4 or 5 flutes. Some played high notes and others low, this making a very agreeable harmony for blacks, from whom we did not expect such music, and they danced in the style of blacks

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<sup>23</sup> According to Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 10 n. 3, the distance by land is 64 leagues and by sea 90. He therefore asserts that 'by sea' may have been 'a slip of the pen' of the author or copyist.

as well.<sup>24</sup> The Captain major then ordered the trumpets to be played, and we, in the boats, danced. The Captain major did so as well when he rejoined us. After the festivity ended, we landed again where we had earlier been, and bought a black ox for 3 bracelets, which we dined off on Sunday. He was very fat, and his meat as delicious as the beef in Portugal.

On Sunday [3 December] many others came, bringing their women and little boys with them. The women stayed on the top of a hill, close to the sea, and they brought many oxen and cows. Having gathered on two spots on the beach, they played music and danced as on Saturday. It is the custom among these people for the young men to remain in the bush with their weapons. The older men came to converse with us, and they carried short sticks in their hands with fox tails attached to them, with which they fan their faces. While thus conversing with them we saw the young men crouching in the bush holding weapons in their hands.

The Captain major then ordered a man called Martin Afonso, who had formerly been in Manicongo,<sup>25</sup> to advance. He then gave him [Afonso] bracelets with which to buy an ox. After they had taken the bracelets, they took him by the hand, and pointed at the watering hole, asking him: why we took away their water? And they began to drive the oxen toward the bush. The Captain major, who saw this, order us to gather together. He also ordered Martim Afonso to return to us, since it seemed to him that they were organizing some treachery. After drawing

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<sup>24</sup> The most notable musical instrument of the Khoikhoi is the *gora* or *goura*, a stringed-wind mouth blown instrument. It is likely that this is the instrument being referred to here by the author. On the *gora*, among others cf. Henry Balfour, "The Goura, A Stringed-Wind Musical Instrument of the Bushmen and Hottentots" *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 32 (1902), pp. 156–176, and Percival R. Kirby, *The Musical Instruments of the Native Races of South Africa* (Oxford, 1934).

<sup>25</sup> The kingdom of Kongo, centered in northern Angola and ruled over by a king called the Manikongo ("Master of Congo"). In the mid-1480s, during the reign of D. João II, Diogo Cão visited the region and established relations with the Manikongo Nzinga Nkuwu. A lucrative slave trade had soon developed, and by 1491 Portuguese missionaries had converted the king to Christianity. Cf. Sir Richard Burton, *Camoens: His Life and his Lusiads* II: 397; Anne Hilton, *Kingdom of Kongo* (Oxford, 1985); and John Thornton, *The Kingdom of Kongo: Civil War and Transition* (Madison, 1983); *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800* (Cambridge, 1998), and *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500–1800* (London, 2000).



together, we proceeded [in our boats] to the place where we had first been, and they followed us. The Captain then ordered us to land with lances, assegais, and strung crossbows, wearing our breastplates. He did this because he wanted to show them that we were powerful and could do them harm, although we had no desire to do so. When they saw this, they began to gather themselves and run to and fro. The Captain, in order to avoid killing any of them by chance, ordered the boats to draw together. To prove that we were able to do them harm, although we did not wish to do so, he then ordered two bombards to be fired from the poop of the long boat. By then, they were all seated on the beach, close to the bush. When they heard the discharge of the bombards, they began to flee so quickly toward the bush that in their flight they dropped the skins with which they were covered and their weapons. After this, they began to gather together and flee for the top of a hill, driving their cattle ahead of them.

The oxen of this land are very large, like those of the Alentejo, and wonderfully fat, and very tame. They are geldings, and do not have horns. On the fattest ones, the blacks place a packsaddle made of reeds, as it is done in Castile. On this saddle they place a type of litter made of sticks, on which they ride. To those that they wish to sell, they put a stick through their nostrils, and thus lead them about.

In this bay there is an island about three bowshots from land.<sup>26</sup> On this island there are many seals. Some are as big as large bears, and they are very fearsome. They have large tusks, and attack men; and no lance however hard it is thrown can wound them. Others are smaller and still others very small indeed. While the big ones roar like lions, the small ones cry like goats. One day to amuse ourselves, we went to this island and saw about 3000 of them, both large and small. We fired among them with our bombards from the sea. On this island there are also birds, as big as ducks, but they cannot fly, because they do not have feathers on their wings. They are called *fortilicaïos*, and we killed as many of them as we liked. These birds bray like asses.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> This distance has been estimated at between 150 and 200 m, or 375 to 400 yards. Cf. Machado and Campos "Relato directo da viagem de descobrimento do caminho marítimo para a Índia." The island actually lies about a mile from shore.

<sup>27</sup> This islet in Mossel Bay is still known as Seal Island. Contrary to Ravenstein, Fontoura da Costa and others, there is still a large colony of Cape Fur seals *arcto-*

On a Wednesday [6 December] while taking on water in this bay of S. Brás we erected a cross and a stone pillar. The cross was made out of a mizzen-mast and very high.<sup>28</sup>

On the following Thursday [7 December] as we were about to set sail from the bay, we saw about 10 or 12 blacks, who even before we had departed from there, tore down both the cross and the pillar.

[From São Brás to Malindi]

Having taken on board everything that was necessary, we departed from there. That day the wind was calm so we made only 2 leagues before anchoring.

Friday morning, the day of the Immaculate Conception [8 December], we again set sail and resumed our course. On Tuesday [12 December], the eve of Sta. Lucia, we encountered a great storm. So we ran before a following wind with the foresail much lowered. On this course we lost sight of Nicolau Coelho. But on this same day, just as the sun was setting, we spied him from the mainsail top, four or five leagues astern, and it seemed that he had seen us as well. We then put up signal lights and lay to. By the end of the first watch [at midnight] he had come up with us, not because he had seen us during the day but because the wind being light, he could do nothing else but follow in our wake.<sup>29</sup>

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*cephalus pusillus* found there. The term *fortilicaios* is probably an error by the copyist for *sotilicaies* or *sotilicarios*. These were Blackfooted or Jackass Penguins *spheniscus demersus*, a flightless seabird, which breeds only on two dozen islands off the South African coast from Namibia to Port Elizabeth.

<sup>28</sup> This mizzen mast was most likely from the storeship which had been dismantled and perhaps burnt here. As for the *padrão* or stone pillar, it was the first erected during the voyage. Da Gama carried three of these pillars with him from Lisbon carved with the arms of Portugal and an inscription to stake a claim to the lands he discovered. Since these three were erected later in the voyage, the one at São Brás was probably not one of these from Portugal but rather one constructed with local stone topped with a cross from the fleet.

<sup>29</sup> The first night watch (*prima*) lasted from 8:00 P.M. through midnight; the second (*modorra*) from midnight until 4:00 A.M., and the third (*alva*) from 4:00 A.M. through 8:00 A.M. Time was kept by using sand filled half hour glasses (*ampulhetes*) that were turned at the beginning of each watch. Eight glasses constituted a full watch.

Friday morning [15 December] we sighted land. This land is called the *Ilhéus Chãos* [Flat Islands], five leagues from the *Ilhéu da Cruz* [Cross Island]. From the bay of S. Brás to the *Ilhéu da Cruz* is 60 leagues, the same as it is from the Cape of Good Hope to the bay of S. Brás. From the *Ilhéu Chaos* to the last stone pillar erected by Bartolomeu Dias is another five leagues; and from the pillar to the *Rio do Infante* is 15 leagues.<sup>30</sup>

On Saturday [16 December] we passed this last stone pillar; and as we sailed along the coast, 2 men began to run along the beach in the opposite direction.<sup>31</sup> This country is very charming and well settled. We saw many livestock here and the further we advanced the better the land and the higher the trees became.

The following night we lay to, since we were already beyond the *Rio do Infante*, which was the last land discovered by Bartolomeu Dias. The next day, we sailed along the coast until vespers with the wind behind us.<sup>32</sup> When the wind shifted to the east, we stood out to sea. And thus we kept tacking until Tuesday at sunset when the wind again veered to the west. We lay to that night, so that on the next day we might recognize the coast and find out where we were. And when the day broke, we made directly for land. At 10 o'clock in the morning we found ourselves once more at the *Ilhéu da Cruz*, that is to say 60 leagues behind our previous position. This was due to the currents which are very strong here.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> This section describes the two island groups in Algoa Bay. Cross or St. Croix Island is the largest of the western group. The 'Flat Islands,' now known as the Bird Island group are low rocky islets rising only to a height of 9 m or 30 feet. These islets are found 40 km or 25 miles to the east. The *Rio do Infante* was probably given this name by Dias to honor João Infante, the captain of the *São Pantaleão* another ship in his fleet which reached the area first. Today, it is known at the Great Fish River found at 33°17' S 27°08' E.

<sup>31</sup> Dias erected this last pillar, the *padrão de S. Gregório* on 12 March 1488. The site was a rocky peninsular which juts into the Indian Ocean known as False Island by the English or *Kwaaihoek* (Windy Corner) in Afrikaans located at 33°43' S 26°37' E. In 1938, the noted South African historian Eric Axelson discovered remnants of the *padrão* on this site. Cf. "Finding of a Bartolomeu Dias Beacon" *South African Geographical Journal* (1939). A replica was erected there in 1988 on the 500th anniversary of Dias' visit.

<sup>32</sup> The 'evening' prayers or vespers were celebrated between four o'clock and six o'clock depending on the time of year.

<sup>33</sup> The Agulhas current is the western boundary current for the southern Indian Ocean. It flows down the east coast of Africa from approximately 27° S to 40° S in a southwesterly direction and averages from 2 to 5 knots, or 2.3 to 5.7 miles per hour.

That same day, we returned to the course we had already attempted, with a strong wind behind us, which held for three or four days. We thereby broke free of the currents which we had greatly feared might not allow us to achieve what we all desired. Henceforth, it pleased God in His Mercy to allow us to make steady headway, and not be driven back. May it please Him that is always be thus.

*[The Natal Coast, the Rio do Cobre, and the Terra da Boa Gente]*

By Christmas Day, the 25th of December, we had discovered 70 leagues of coast. On that day, after dinner, when setting a studding sail, we discovered the mast had a crack a couple of yards below the top, and the crack opened and shut. We patched it with backstays, until we could reach a sheltered port where we could properly repair it.

On Thursday [28 December] we anchored near shore and caught many fish. At sunset we set sail and continued our course. At that place we lost an anchor as the mooring rope snapped as we were putting to sea.<sup>34</sup>

From there we sailed so far out to sea, without touching any port, that we soon had no water that we could drink. In order to eat, we had to cook in salt water. Our daily ration of water in fact was reduced to a *quartilho*. It therefore became necessary to make for port.<sup>35</sup>

On Thursday, the 11th of January,<sup>36</sup> we sighted a small river, and we anchored here near the coast. The next day [12 January] we went close to shore in our boats. We found many black men and women. They were tall people and a chief was among them.

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<sup>34</sup> On the map of Nicolau Caneiro (ca. 1505) there is a *Ponta da Percaria* in this vicinity. This name was traditionally used on Portuguese maps beginning with that in Lopo Homen's *Atlas* of 1519. This location was probably Tugela Bluffs found at 29°23' S 31°46' E.

<sup>35</sup> The unit of liquid measurement was the *almude* = 12 *canadas* = 48 *quartilhos* which varied in size depending on time and place from 16–24 liters. At the time of Da Gama's voyage, the *quartilho* was a short handled copper measuring jug equal to one fourth of a *canada* which probably held .5 liter or approximately 17 fluid ounces. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 16 n. 2, defined this term as equivalent to 'three-fourths of a [Imperial] pint' or 15 fluid ounces.

<sup>36</sup> The manuscript reads January 10th but this was an error of the author or copyist, as the 10th fell on a Wednesday that year.

The Captain major ordered Martim Afonso, who had been in Manicongo for a long time, and another man, to land. They received our men hospitably. The Captain consequently sent the chief a jacket, a pair of red pantaloons, a cap, and a bracelet. In reply, he said that we were welcome to anything in his country of which we had need, and that he would give it with much pleasure. At least, this is how Martim Afonso understood him. That night, Martim Afonso and his companion accompanied the chief to sleep in his village, while we returned to our ships. On the road, the chief dressed in the garments he had been given. He said, with much contentment, to those who came out to receive him: "Look, what has been given to me?!" And they clapped their hands as a sign of courtesy, three or four times until he arrived at the village. There, he paraded around the whole of the place, thus dressed up until he retired to his house. He ordered the two men who accompanied him sheltered in a compound. There, they were given a porridge of millet, which is plentiful in this country, and a chicken like those in Portugal. All that night many men and women came to see them. When morning came [13 January], the chief visited them, and asked them to return [to the ships]. He ordered two men to escort them. He also gave them chickens for the Captain major, telling them that he would show what he had been given to a great chief that they have, whom it seems to us must be the king of that country. When they reached the landing place where the boats waited for them, they were accompanied by at least two hundred men who had come to see them.

This country, it appears to us, is very densely populated. There are many chiefs here.<sup>37</sup> The women, it seems, were more numerous than the men. Because when twenty men came, forty women would appear. The houses are made of straw. Their arms include long bows and arrows and short spears with iron blades. Copper seems to be plentiful here, since the people wear it on their legs and arms, and in their braided hair. Tin is also found in this country, as they use it on the hilts of their

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<sup>37</sup> Thus, as Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 17 n. 1, pointed out, the name 'Land of the Chiefs' or *Terra dos Fumos* found on early 16th century maps. In Swahili, *fumo*, *mafumo*, or *mfumo* signifies the title of chief. The combination of the slash and burn agriculture of the Nguni in this region and the fact that in Portuguese *fumo* signifies 'smoke' has led some to argue that this was the true origin of the name. Since only 'chiefs' are mentioned in this section, Ravenstein's interpretation was probably accurate. Nevertheless, later Portuguese expeditions may have witnessed the smoke from these brush clearing fires and perpetuated the belief that they were indeed the origin of this name.

daggers; and the sheaths are made of ivory. The people of this country greatly prize linen cloth; as they gave us much copper in exchange for shirts, if we desired it. These people have dried gourds in which they carry sea water to the interior, where they place it in pools, and thus obtain salt.

We remained here for five days taking on water, which our visitors brought to the boats. But we did not take on as much water as we would have liked, as the wind favored continuing our voyage.

While we were anchored here along the coast, we were exposed to the swell of the sea. We called this country the *Terra de Boa Gente* [*Land of Good People*] and the river *do Cobre* [of Copper].<sup>38</sup>

On Monday [22 January], while at sea, we sighted a low coast thickly wooded with tall trees. Continuing on this course we saw the mouth of a broad river. Since it was necessary to discover where we were, we dropped anchor. On Thursday night [25 January] we entered [the river's mouth]. The *Berrio* was already there, having entered the previous day [24 January], that is to say eight days before the end of January.

This land is very low lying and marshy, with tall trees, which yield an abundance of many types of fruits, which the inhabitants eat.

These people are black and well proportioned. They go naked, wearing only a piece of cotton cloth to cover their privates, and the chiefs wear larger pieces of cloth.<sup>39</sup> The young women are good looking. Their lips are pierced in three places, and they wear bits of twisted tin there. These people took great pleasure in us, and in *almadias*<sup>40</sup> brought us what they had. For our part, we went to their village to procure water.

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<sup>38</sup> The Inharrime River found in the southern Inhambane province of Mozambique, approximately 70 km or 44 miles south of Cape Correntes. It was here that the fleet had its first interaction with the densely populated Bantu speaking people of this region. Their hospitality led Da Gama to give the region this flattering name.

<sup>39</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 20, translated this line 'they go naked, merely wearing a piece of cotton stuff around their loins, that worn by the *women* being larger than that worn by the men.' But the text reads 'os senhores' so that 'chiefs' is correct here.

<sup>40</sup> These were dug-out canoes, from the Arabic *al-ma-diya*. In Spain, the term is used more commonly for rafts made of lashed tree trunks.

When we had been there two or three days, two chiefs came to see us. But they were so haughty that they valued nothing that we gave them. One of them wore a *touca*<sup>41</sup> with a fringe embroidered in silk, and the other wore a cap of green satin. In their company came a young man, who, according to their signs, was from a distant land. He said that he had already seen large ships like those that carried us. These indications greatly gladdened us, since it seemed as if we were approaching the place we desired to go. These chiefs ordered some huts built on the river bank close to the ships; in which they stayed for about seven days. From there they daily sent to our ships clothes which bore a mark of red ochre to barter. After they tired of being there, they departed in their *almadias* for the upper part of the river.

We stayed in this river for thirty two days. During that time we took on water, careened the ships, and repaired the mast of the *Rafael*.<sup>42</sup> Many of our men took ill here, their feet and hands swelling, and their gums growing so much over their teeth, that these men could not eat.<sup>43</sup>

Here, we also erected a stone pillar. We named it the "Pillar of St. Raphael," because it had been brought here in that ship; and to the river [we gave the name] *dos Bons Sinais*.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> On the Swahili coast this was a round, brimless hat similar to the *kofia* or *fez*. The etymology of the term is not entirely clear but it can probably be traced to the Medieval French *toque*, *toca* in Castilian or perhaps even the Arabic *taqa*. In early Portuguese manuscripts accounts, however, *toque* generally refers to turbans, while *carapuça* denotes a skull cap.

<sup>42</sup> From the 24 January until the 24 February inclusive of both dates. Barros DI C. III (139–140) also mentions that the ships were beached and cleaned during this time.

<sup>43</sup> This was the first onset of scurvy, from the Latin *scorbutus*, in the fleet caused by a lack of citrus fruits and vitamin C. According to Castanheda LI C. IV (16) Paulo da Gama distinguished himself during this outbreak by comforting the sick and even sharing his personal 'medicines' with them.

<sup>44</sup> This 'River of Good Signs (or Omens)' was the Quelimane found at 17°53' S 36°51' E. This is the northern most mouth of the great Zambezi River with the Luabo located further south. The Portuguese thus would call the Zambezi basin area the *Rios de Cuama*. The stone pillar carried aboard the *São Rafael* was probably erected on a point north of the Quelimane but no trace of it has been found. On the Dr. Hamy's 1502 map there is the inscription at the location 'Padra de San Rafaell.' Cf. Burton, *Camoens* II: 407.

*[From the Rio dos Bons Sinais to Mozambique]*

On Saturday the 24th of February we left this place; and gained the open sea that day. During the night we headed east to move away from the coast, which was very pleasing to look upon. On Sunday [25 February] we headed NE, and at vesper time we saw three small islands, out to sea. Two were covered with tall tress, while the third was smaller and more barren than the others; and from one to the other was four leagues.<sup>45</sup> *Because it was dark, we returned to the open sea. That night we passed by them.*<sup>46</sup>

The next day [26 February] we continued on our route, and sailed for six days at sea; lying to at night.<sup>47</sup>

On Thursday, the 1st of March in the evening, we sighted islands and the mainland, but because it was late, we again stood out to sea and lay to until morning. We then approached the land whose description follows.

*[Mozambique]*<sup>48</sup>

On Friday morning [2 March], Nicolau Coelho while attempting to enter the bay, mistook the channel and struck a sand bar. While putting about toward the other ships, which were following him, he noticed some sailing boats approaching from a settlement on this island. They were coming out in order to salute the Captain major and his brother with much pleasure. As for ourselves, we tacked in order to find a good anchorage. But the more we continued on this course, the more they

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<sup>45</sup> These were the *Ilhas Primeiras* (First Islands) the *Insule Primeras* on the maps of Dr. Hamy and Caneiro. The name probably derived from the fact that these were the 'first islands' encountered by Da Gama in the Indian Ocean. This five island chain spreads across 15 leagues of ocean. The two northern islands of Casuarina and Epidendron have trees and were therefore sighted by the fleet. The three southern islands (Crown, Fogo, and Sylva) are bare. It appears that Da Gama and his men therefore did not sight the two southernmost islands (Fogo and Sylva).

<sup>46</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 21, does not include this passage in his translation.

<sup>47</sup> These days evidently began with the departure of the fleet from the *Rio dos Bons Sinais* on 24 February and end with the arrival at Mozambique on 1 March 1498.

<sup>48</sup> There is a blank section in the manuscript of ca. 14 lines between the preceding paragraph and the section on Mozambique Island or Kisiwani Msumbiji.



followed, signaling to us that we should wait for them. As we were dropping anchor in the roadstead of the island from which these boats had come, seven or eight of these boats and *almadias* approached us. The people in them played the *anafis*<sup>49</sup> they carried, telling us that we should proceed further into the bay and that, if we wished, they would take us into the port. Those who came aboard our ships ate and drank what we did, and after they got their fill, they departed.

The captains had the opinion that we should enter this bay, in order to determine what sort of people we had to deal with. Nicolau Coelho would go first with his ship to sound the bar at the entrance. If it were possible to enter, the others would follow him. As Nicolau Coelho prepared to enter, he ran aground on the point of the island and broke his rudder. But as soon as he hit, he managed to free himself and regain deep water. I was there with him.<sup>50</sup> As soon as we made deep water we struck our sails and dropped anchor two bowshots from the town.<sup>51</sup>

The people of this country have a ruddy complexion<sup>52</sup> and are well made. They are of the Mohammedan sect, and speak like Moors. Their robes are of fine linens and cotton stuffs, very fine, of many colors and stripes, and of rich and elaborate workmanship. They all wear *toucas* on their heads, with silk borders embroidered in gold. They are merchants and trade with White Moors,<sup>53</sup> four of whose vessels were here in port, laden with gold, silver, cloth, cloves, pepper, ginger, and silver rings with many pearls, seed pearls,<sup>54</sup> and rubies. All of these articles are used by the people of this country. We understood them to say that

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<sup>49</sup> The *anafil* was a type of round wooden trumpet, from the Arabic *al-nafir*. These instruments were short horns similar to the *zumari* or the double reed shawm, precursors to the oboe in Europe.

<sup>50</sup> This was probably the NE point of the *ilha de Moçambique*.

<sup>51</sup> The fleet anchored between the two smaller islets São Jorge (now *ilha de Goa*) and Santiago (now *ilha de Sena*) and the larger *ilha de Moçambique*.

<sup>52</sup> In the manuscript the word is *ruivo* meaning 'reddish' Castanheda I C. V (17) and Barros DI C. III (140–141?) used the word *baço* or tawny, the same word used above cf. p. 3 and p. 3 n. 15 to describe the Khoikhoi of the Cape region.

<sup>53</sup> The author uses this term to distinguish Arabs, mainly resident merchants, or 'White Moors' from the Africans of the Swahili coast or 'Moors' who spoke Arabic as well.

<sup>54</sup> *Aljôfar* in the manuscript, from the Arabic *aljauhar*. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 23 n. 4, quoting Sir Richard Burton translates this as 'jewels' at this point in the text but then in his glossary, p. 239, defines it as 'seed pearls' so it is not clear why he did not include this translation in the main text.

all these things, with the exception of gold, are shipped here, and that the Moors bring them. Further on, where we are headed, they abound, and the precious stones, pearls, and spices are so plentiful that there was no need to purchase them, but merely pick them up in baskets. All of this we learned from a sailor the Captain major had with him, who formerly had been a captive of the Moors, and therefore understood the language of those whom we found here.<sup>55</sup>

These same Moors also told us that along the route we were following, we would encounter many shoals; and cities along the coast. And that we would come across an island in which one half of the population are Moors and the other half Christians;<sup>56</sup> and these Christians are at war with the Moors, and that this island is very wealthy.

Moreover, we were told that Prester John<sup>57</sup> resided not far from this place, and that he controlled many cities along the coast. The inhabitants of those cities were great merchants and possessed great ships; but Prester John himself resided far inland and that one could only go there on camels. These Moors also brought two Indian Christians here with them. These things, and many others which the Moors told us; made us so happy that, with much joy, we cried and begged God that he grant us health so that we might behold what we all desired.

In this place and island, called Mozambique, there resided a chief that they call sultan, who is like a vice-roy. He often came to our ships,

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<sup>55</sup> According to Barros DI C.III (140) and Castanheda LI C.V (17), the man who could translate from Arabic was Fernão Martins.

<sup>56</sup> Da Gama's instructions from D. Manuel specified that he was to do everything he could to cultivate friendly relations with whatever Christian kings and peoples he encountered on the voyage.

<sup>57</sup> By the time of Da Gama's departure, the longstanding semi-mythical legends concerning a Christian king ruling over domains surrounded by the Muslims and pagans of the Orient had come to focus on the Emperor of Ethiopia (*nəgusä nəgäst* or 'king of kings') based at Shewa. In large part, this identification with Ethiopia can be traced to the 1490 letter from Cairo by D. João II's Arabic speaking agent Pedro da Covilha that probably reached Lisbon by that time. Covilha beginning in 1487 had undertaken a fruitful reconnaissance mission for the Portuguese via the traditional caravan routes and reached Shewa. Moreover, Lucas Marcos, an Abyssinian priest had also reached Lisbon from Rome in ca. 1490. Marcos certainly entrenched this belief in Lisbon and received letters from D. João proposing an alliance. Da Gama probably received precise instructions to obtain additional information on this Christian king.

accompanied by his retainers.<sup>58</sup> The Captain gave him many good things to eat and made him a present of hats, *marlotas*,<sup>59</sup> coral, and many other things. But he was so proud that he scorned everything we gave him; and he asked instead for scarlet cloth which we had not brought. But we gave him samples of all the things we had.

One day, the Captain major made him a present of many figs and preserves, and asked that he provide two pilots to accompany us. He agreed provided that we satisfied their demands. The Captain major gave them each thirty *meticais*<sup>60</sup> of gold and two *marlotas*; on the condition that from the day on which they received this payment, if they desired to go ashore, one of them would always remain aboard ship. They were very pleased with these terms.

On a Saturday, which was the 10th day of March, we departed and anchored a league out to sea, close to an island where on Sunday mass was celebrated and those who wished confessed and took communion.<sup>61</sup>

One of the pilots remained on the [main] island<sup>62</sup> and after we had anchored, we armed two boats to go and search for him. The Captain

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<sup>58</sup> This was Sheik Muhammed bin Sharif al-Alwai. Barros DI C.III (140) and Góis PI C.XXXVI (74) call him Çacoei(j)a or Sacoeje but in this they probably confused his name with the nickname of the Malindian sultan. A 1517 letter from Sheik al-Alwai to D. Manuel implies that he initially met Vasco da Gama on this voyage. Cf. "N.XXII, Carta do Xarife Mahomed Elalui de Moçambique, escrita a El Rey D. Manuel" in *Documentos Arabicos para a Historia Portuguesa*, edited by J. de Sousa (Lisbon, 1790), pp. 85–86, cited in Jeremy G. Prestholdt "As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World, circa 1450 to 1600" Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, Working Papers Series, Number 3 (1998), p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> A short, hooded dress or cloak made of wool or silk, commonly worn in Muslim countries, from the Arabic *mallota*.

<sup>60</sup> The *mitkal* or *mithqal* was a weight of gold based on the Syrian dinar of ca. 4.41 grams. In Portuguese coinage of the period the gold *cruzado* at 23¾ carats weighed 3.54 grams and was equal to ca. 400 *reis*. Therefore, each *mitkal* would equal ca. 498 *reis*. Góis PI C. C.XXXVII (75) gives the figure of 420 *reis* each.

<sup>61</sup> This was the *ilha de São Jorge*, today called the *ilha de Goa* about 5km or 3 miles offshore. According to Barros DI C.III (140) da Gama erected a pillar dedicated to St. George here, hence the name.

<sup>62</sup> In Portuguese *ficava em a ilha*, which Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 25, translated as 'lived on the island.' However, it seems more appropriate to use 'remained.' Following the conditions set by Da Gama, one of the pilots had gone ashore on the *ilha de Moçambique* and recognizing that the Portuguese were not Muslims as originally

major went in one of these boats and Nicolau Coelho in the other. As they were proceeding, five or six boats came out to meet them, with many men aboard armed with bows and long arrows and bucklers,<sup>63</sup> and signaled them that they were to return to town [with them]. The Captain major, when he saw this, seized the pilot that he brought with him, and ordered the bombards to fire at the men coming out at them in the boats. Paulo da Gama, had remained with the ships, so that in case of need he could provide assistance. When he heard the bombards, he set sail in the *Berrio*. The Moors, who were already fleeing, when they saw the ship under sail fled even faster, and reached shelter on shore before the *Berrio* reached them. We therefore returned to our anchorage.

On Sunday we celebrated mass on the island beneath a very tall tree.<sup>64</sup> After mass, we returned to our ships, and at once set sail following our course, with many chickens, goats, and pigeons, that we bartered for here in exchange for small glass beads.

The ships of this land are of good size and without decks.<sup>65</sup> They do not have nails, and are held together by coir rope, as are the smaller boats. Their sails are made of palm matting and their mariners have Genoese needles,<sup>66</sup> by which they steer, quadrants, and nautical charts.

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believed had not returned. This would also explain the hostile reception the Portuguese received. Cf. Castanheda LI C.VII (20).

<sup>63</sup> *Tavolochinha* in the original manuscript. This is an archaic word for a small shield or buckler, whose etymology probably relates to the Latin *tabula* meaning board or plank. Castanheda LI C.VII (20) used *escudo* = for shield. Herculano, *Roteiro*, pp. 150–51, has an excellent footnote on this term.

<sup>64</sup> In his translation, Ravenstein, apparently in an effort to improve readability, moved this short paragraph and inserted it after the gap of 4 lines on the following page.

<sup>65</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 26, translated this line ‘of good size and decked.’ The manuscript, however, reads *sem cobertas*.

<sup>66</sup> That is to say the nautical compass. The Portuguese were impressed with the sophistication of the instruments and charts of the pilots of the Indian Ocean. For details, cf. the *Kitāb ūl Muhiṭ: El Muhiṭ fī Ilmi’l Eflāk ve’l Buhār* or “Book of the Oceans and the Science of Astronomy and Navigation” compiled by the Turkish admiral Seydi ‘Ali Reis in ca. 1554. Published by M. Bittner and W. Tomascheck as *Die topographischen Capitel des indischen Seespiegels Mohiṭ* (Vienna, 1897) and later by Júlio Gonçalves and Alfredo Pequito as *O bahr-i-mohit ou “Espelho dos mares” de Sidi-Ali ben Hussein: Roteiro do mar das Índias* (Lisbon, 1958). Arab, Persian, and Indian pilots determined latitude based on the altitudes of notable stars including the Pole Star, the Calves of Ursa Minor, or the Back of the Great Bear (*Thahr al Dubb al Akbar*) in relation to the horizon. This altitude was expressed in *isbas* or inches equivalent to

The palm trees of this land yield a fruit as large as melons, and the pulp inside is eaten, and tastes like nutty sedge.<sup>67</sup> There are also many cucumbers and melons, which they brought to us to barter.

On the day [2 March] Nicolau Coelho entered the port, the Lord of this [place] came aboard his ship with a large retinue. He was well received, and Coelho gave him a red hood, and the Lord gave him some black beads that he used when he prayed, which he gave him as a guarantee. He then asked Nicolau Coelho for the use of his ship's boat to take him to shore, and Coelho granted this request. After landing, he invited those who had accompanied him to his residence. He then dismissed them, and sent Nicolau Coelho a jar of pressed dates<sup>68</sup> made into a preserve with cloves and cumin. Afterwards, he sent many things to the Captain Major. All of this transpired when he thought we were Turks or Moors from some other land. For indeed they asked us if we came from Turkey, and that we show them bows of our land and our books of law. But after they learned that we were Christians, they arranged to seize us and kill us by treachery. But the pilot, whom we took with us, revealed everything they had planned to do against us, if they were able.

[Gap of 4 lines]

On Tuesday [13 March] we sighted land, beyond a point, which had high mountains.<sup>69</sup> This point, extending out from the coast, was sparsely covered with tall trees resembling elms; and this land was more than twenty leagues from our starting point.

We remained becalmed here on Tuesday and Wednesday [13–14 March]. The following night we tacked with a light easterly breeze.

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1° 42' 50", and divided into eight *zams* or eighths, with each parallel equaling 12' 51" or three hours sailing time.

<sup>67</sup> This is evidently a reference to the nut from the coconut palm or *Cocos nucifera*.

<sup>68</sup> *Tâmaras pisadas*. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 28, translated this phrase as "bruised dates." But in addition to the dubious benefit of presenting "bruised" dates as a welcoming gift to Coelho, the verb *pisar* is traditionally used for "pressing" or "crushing" grapes and therefore seems more appropriate here.

<sup>69</sup> Later named the *Picos Fragosos* (Craggy Peaks). There is a word of two missing before and after this phrase which occurs on the final line on the manuscript folio.

And when morning came [15 March], we found ourselves four leagues abaft [behind] Mozambique. On that day we made way until evening and anchored close to the island<sup>70</sup> where we had celebrated mass the previous Sunday [11 March]. We remained there for eight days waiting for a favorable wind.

During this respite, the king of Mozambique sent word to us that he wanted to make peace with us and be our friend. To negotiate this peace he sent as ambassador, a White Moor who was a sharīf, that is to say a clergyman, who was also a great drunkard.<sup>71</sup>

While we were here, a Moor appeared with a young boy, his son, and came aboard one of our ships. He said that he wanted to go with us, as he was from near Mecca and had come to Mozambique as the pilot of a ship from that land.

Since the winds still did not favor us, it became necessary to enter the port of Mozambique to take on water, of which we had need. The watering place is located on the mainland; and this is the water that they drink on the island, because all the water found there is brackish.

On Thursday [22 March] we entered the port. As it grew dark we lowered the boats. At midnight, the Captain major and Nicolau Coelho, accompanied by some of us, went in search of the watering place. We took the Moorish pilot with us, who acted more like he wanted to flee, if he had the chance, than to show us where the water was found. Consequently he was not able to show us where it was, or [perhaps] he never intended to. Nevertheless, we continued our search until dawn. We then returned to the ships.

That evening [23 March] we returned once more to the mainland with the same pilot. On approaching the watering place, we saw about twenty

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<sup>70</sup> Ilha de São Jorge.

<sup>71</sup> Sharīf is Arabic for “noble” or “high born.” Narrowly defined it is a title reserved for members of the Prophet Mohammed’s Banu Hashim clan and particularly descendants of his son-in-law Ali and daughter Fatimah. More generally, it extends to those with noble ancestry or political power, as the Grand Sharif or Governor of Mecca. In Ravenstein’s view, *Journal*, p. 29 n. 1, “although not ‘priests,’ they enjoy a certain religious rank.”

of them<sup>72</sup> on the beach, fanning out, with assegais in their hands, preparing to defend the watering place against us. The Captain major then ordered three bombards fired at them so that we might land. Having made our landing, they fled into the bush. We took as much water as we desired; and when we gathered to depart it was nearly sunset. We then confirmed that a black belonging to João de Coimbra had fled.

On Saturday morning,<sup>73</sup> the 24th of March, the eve of the day of Our Lady, a Moor came alongside our ships. He told us that if we wanted water, we could go and search for it, giving us to understand that if we did we would meet with something which would make us turn back. The Captain major, when he heard this, resolved that we would in fact go there, in order to show them that we could do them harm, if we desired it. For this reason, with our boats armed with bombards placed in the sterns, we promptly made for the village. The Moors had made very solid palisades, of lashed planks, bound tightly together, so that those behind it could not be seen. They were walking along the beach armed with bucklers,<sup>74</sup> assegais, curved daggers,<sup>75</sup> bows, and slings, with which they flung stones at us. But with our bombards, we made it so hot for them that they abandoned the beach. They then placed themselves behind the palisade they had made, which did them more harm than good. We thus occupied ourselves for three hours. During this time, we saw two men killed, one of them on the beach, the other behind the palisade. After we tired of this work, we retired to dine aboard our ships, and they soon began to flee carrying their chattel in *almadias* heading for a village on the mainland.

After we had dined, we went out in our boats to see if we might capture some of them, whom we wanted to exchange for the two Indian Christians, who they held in captivity and the black who had fled from us. With this in mind, we chased an *almadia* belonging to the sharif, which was loaded with his chattel, and another that carried four blacks. Paulo da Gama captured this one; while the one loaded with chattel

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<sup>72</sup> Under this word the copyist inserted the word "blacks."

<sup>73</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 30, mistakenly has "Sunday" morning here.

<sup>74</sup> *Tavolachinhas* which Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 30, does not include in this passage.

<sup>75</sup> The word used here is *agomias* from the Arabic *janbiya* and *janb*, "the side"; a curved dagger worn in the waist-belt so it can easily be drawn across the body.

reached shore. The crew then fled abandoning the *almadia*. We took this one and others that we found left along the shore. The blacks were taken to our ships. In the *almadias*, we found fine cotton cloth, baskets made of palm fronds, a glazed vase containing butter, glass phials with scented water; books of their law; a chest filled with cotton skeins; a net, also made of cotton; and many small baskets filled with millet. All the things that we took there, the Captain major gave to the sailors who were with him and to the other captains, except for the books which he kept to show to the king.

On Sunday [25 March] we took on water. On Monday [26 March] we cruised by the village in armed boats, and the Moors *remained* behind their houses,<sup>76</sup> not daring to venture onto the beach. After having fired a few bombards at them we returned to our ships.

On Tuesday [27 March] we departed from the town, and anchored close to the islets of São Jorge,<sup>77</sup> where we remained for three days, hoping that God would grant us a favorable wind.

[Mozambique to the Shoals of São Rafael]

On Thursday, the 29th of March, we departed from these islets. But because the wind was light, from then until Saturday morning, the 31st of that month,<sup>78</sup> we made only twenty eight leagues. That morning, we were once more abreast of the land of the Moors, where we had previously been forced back by the very powerful currents found there.

Sunday, the 1st day of April, we came upon some islands very close to the mainland. To the first of these islands we gave the name *ilha do Açoutado* [island of the flogged one] because on Saturday afternoon,<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> This word has traditionally been read as *falavam*. So the line reads ‘the Moors spoke to us from behind their houses.’ But José Machado and Viriato Campos “Relato directo da viagem de descobrimento do caminho marítimo para a Índia, segundo o manuscrito anónimo existente na Biblioteca Municipal do Porto” in *Vasco da Gama e a Sua Viagem de Descobrimeto* (Lisbon, 1969) have suggested *ficavam* or ‘remained,’ which seems more logical in this context.

<sup>77</sup> The islet of São Jorge and that of Santiago about 1¼ miles to the south.

<sup>78</sup> The manuscript has the 30th but this was an error of the author or copyist since Saturday was the 31st.

<sup>79</sup> Ravenstein translated this phrase “Saturday night”, but the text reads “*sabado à tarde*” so afternoon seems more appropriate.



the Moorish pilot, that we carried with us, lied to the Captain. He told him that these islands were the mainland, and for this lie the captain ordered him flogged. Ships of this land sail between the mainland and these islands, where the water is four fathoms, but we kept to seaward of them. There are many of these islands, and they are so close together, that we were not able to distinguish one from the others. They are inhabited.<sup>80</sup>

On Monday [2 April] we sighted other islands five leagues out to sea.<sup>81</sup>

On Wednesday, the 4th of April, we made sail and headed NW. Before noon we sighted an extensive land, and two islands close to it; and this land has vast shoals surrounding it. As soon as we came close enough for the pilots to recognize it; they told us that an island inhabited by Christians lay three leagues behind us.<sup>82</sup> And so we labored all day in order to see if we might return there. But because the west wind was so strong we could not head back. After this, the Captains thought it best that we make for a city that was four days ahead of us, called Mombasa.

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<sup>80</sup> These are the Querimba or Quirimba Islands, located at 12°10' to 13°10' S and 40°45' E off the Mozambique coast. The *ilha do Açoutado* is Quisiva at 12°35' S. The early 16th century maps and charts of Dr. Hamy (1502), Caneiro, and Waldseemüller (1507) all include references to this name (*p. assoutado, ilhas de acurado, and insulae arurado*).

<sup>81</sup> As Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 32 n. 2, pointed out these islands are off Cape Delgado (10°41' S 40°05' E) and were called the *Ilhas das Cabeças* (*Cabras?*) on the charts of Dr. Hamy and Caneiro. The northern most of these islands is found at the mouth of the *Baia do Tungue*. None of the islands are more than three leagues off shore.

<sup>82</sup> The island that Da Gama was seeking was Kilwa or Kilwa Kisiwani (*Ilha de Quíloa*). This island state was the most powerful on the Swahili coast. As Duarte Barbosa wrote a little later, "when the King of Portugal discovered this land, the Moors of Sofala, and Zuama [Zambezi], Angoux [Angoshe], and Mozambique were all under obedience to the King of Quíloa, who was a great king amongst them." Kilwa Kisiwani was a rich and populous city thanks to its role as an entrepôt for the rich gold trade carried from the inland empire of Monomotapa to coastal Sofala. Through Kilwa, in turn, luxury goods from China, India, and Arabia reached the interior. Cf. *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century* by Duarte Barbosa, *A Portuguese*, translated and edited by Henry E.J. Stanley (London, 1866), pp. 10–11.

This island was one that we had come in search of, which the pilots we carried said was inhabited by Christians. So we made way although it was already late and the wind was very strong. At nightfall we sighted a very large island which lay to the north of us, *the Moorish pilots*<sup>83</sup> aboard told us that on the island there were two towns, one of Christians, the other of Moors.<sup>84</sup> That night we stood out to sea, and when the day broke, we could not see land. And so we followed a course to the NW and in the evening we again sighted land.

[*From the Shoals of São Rafael to Mombasa*]

The following night we shaped a course to the N by NW, but during the morning watch we shifted it to the NNW. Sailing thus before a favorable wind, two hours before dawn the *S. Rafael* ran aground on a shoal about two leagues from the mainland. As the *Rafael* touched bottom, the vessels following her were warned by shouts, so that as soon as they heard them, they anchored about a gunshot from her, and lowered their boats.

But as it was soon low tide, the *Rafael* remained high and dry. With the help of the boats they dropped many anchors at sea; and as the tide rose during the day, and reached its highest point, the ship floated, and with this we all rejoiced.

On the mainland, facing these shoals, there rises a very high and beautiful mountain range; which we called the *serras de São Rafael*. We gave the same name to the shoals.<sup>85</sup>

While the ship was high and dry, two *almadias* approached us. These boats brought sweet, fine, oranges, better than those in Portugal. Two

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<sup>83</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 33, translates this phrase 'our pilot told us.'

<sup>84</sup> This island was Mafia or *ilha de Mamfia* found at 7°51' S and 39°47' E. It is not clear if the island's name comes from the Arabic *morfiyeh* for "archipelago", or *mafi* for "waste" or "little value." Conversely in Swahili, *mahali pa afya* signifies "a healthy dwelling-place".

<sup>85</sup> These 'shoals' are the coral reefs of Karange Island off Mtangata Bay in Tanzania found at 5°13' S and 39°07' E. The *serras de São Rafael* are the Usambara Mountains rising to 7500 feet, 20 miles inland, but visible on a clear day from Zanzibar, some 50 miles away.

Moors remained on board the ship, and accompanied us the next day to a city, which is called Mombasa.

On Saturday morning, the 7th of that month, and the eve of Palm Sunday, we cruised along the coast and saw some islands. They were about fifteen leagues out to sea from the mainland, and six leagues lengthwise on average. On these islands there are many trees suitable for masts, and so they outfit their ships with masts from these islands. They are all inhabited by Moors.<sup>86</sup>

[Mombasa]

As sunset approached<sup>87</sup> [7 April] we dropped anchor in front of the city of Mombasa but did not enter the port. As soon as we arrived, a *zarva* came out to us,<sup>88</sup> filled with Moors. In front of the city there were many ships all dressed with their standards.<sup>89</sup> Not wishing to be outdone, we did the same to our ships, and even more, for we wanted for nothing save men, for even the few that we had were very ill. We anchored here with much pleasure, since it seemed to us that the next day we would go ashore to hear mass with the Christians, which they had told us lived here, in a quarter separate from the Moors with their own *alcaide*.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Pemba Island or *al Jazeera al Khadra* (the Green island) found at 5°10' S and 39°13' E. Pemba is part of the Zanzibar archipelago and at that time was heavily wooded. As Ravenstein, p. 34 n. 1, noted, the Portuguese may have mistook its deep bays for separate islands. The island is actually found about 9 leagues or 30 miles offshore.

<sup>87</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 34, did not include this phrase in his translation.

<sup>88</sup> These ships were dhows, the traditional sailing vessels of the Indian Ocean. These open boats of varying size were characterized by a lateen or triangular sail and a hull of stitched planks held together by coir roping. The word dhow can probably be traced to the Swahili *dau*. However, the Portuguese may have also based *zavra* or *zabra* on the Arabic *zauraq* for skiff or boat.

<sup>89</sup> These decorations were probably in preparation for the onset of the Islamic month of Ramadan which began that year on the 23rd April. While Ravenstein, *Journal*, pp. 34–35, pointed out that the “Swahili” dress their vessels for the three day *bairam* following Ramadan, he also noted that these festivities would not have begun until 22 May. It is possible, however, that in Mombasa these decorations may have taken place in advance of *kula mfungo* (“feasting and amusements”) which immediately precede the onset of fasting. Cf. P.J.L. Frankl, “The Observance of Ramadan in Swahili-Land (With Special Reference to Mombasa)”, *Journal of Religion in Africa* XXVI, 4 (1996), pp. 416–34.

<sup>90</sup> From the Arabic *al-qā' id* for the leader or *qāda* to lead. This term was used in Portugal as the title for the governor or commander of a fortress or province. Vasco

The pilots, who accompanied us, told us that on this island of Mombasa both Moors and Christians resided, and that they lived separate from one another. Each of them had their own Lord, and that upon our arrival here, they would receive us with much honor and take us to their houses. But they said this for their own reasons, and not because it was true. That night, at midnight, a *zarva* approached us with about one hundred men aboard, all armed with cutlasses and bucklers. When they arrived at the Captain major's ship they all wanted to board her thus armed, but he would not permit it. Only four or five of the most distinguished of them were permitted aboard, and they stayed there about two hours and then departed. It seemed to us that they paid this visit merely to see if they might capture one of our ships.

On Palm Sunday [8 April] the king of Mombasa sent the Captain major a sheep, and many oranges, citrons, and sugar cane. He also sent a ring as a pledge of safety, informing him that if he desired he might enter the port and be supplied with all he had need of. This present was brought to us by two men, very fair skinned, who said they were Christians, and to us this seemed to be the case. The Captain in turn sent him a string of coral beads, informing him that he intended to enter the port the following day. On the same day four Moors of distinction visited the Captain major's ship.

The Captain then sent two men<sup>91</sup> to the king of this city in order to confirm these peaceful overtures. These men, as soon as they landed, were followed by a crowd as far as the gate of the palace. Before they reached the king, they passed through four doors, each guarded by a doorkeeper with a drawn cutlass in his hands. And when they reached the king, he received them hospitably, and ordered that they be shown the entire city. In doing so, they were taken to the house of two Christian merchants; who showed them a card which they worshipped, on which there was a depiction of the Holy Ghost.<sup>92</sup> After seeing all, the

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da Gama's father, for example, was *alcaide-mor* of the town of Sines in the Alentejo.

<sup>91</sup> The men sent on such uncertain missions were usually *degradados* or convict-exiles whose sentences were usually commuted provided they served the king on overseas expeditions.

<sup>92</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 36 n. 1, citing Sir Richard Burton, *Camoens: His Life and His Lusiads: A Commentary* (2 vols., London, 1881), II: 420 endorses the view that this image may have been of Kapot-eshwar and his wife Kapotesi, incarnations of Shiva and Pravati.

king ordered samples of cloves, pepper, ginger, and sorghum<sup>93</sup> sent with them to show the Captain, saying that he could load these articles.

On Tuesday [10 April] in weighing anchor to enter the port the Captain major's ship could not come around, as its stern was facing land. So we again dropped anchor. When the Moors who were aboard our ships saw that we were not getting underway, they placed themselves in a *zarva* already tied to our stern, and the pilots who had come with us from Mozambique, jumped into the water, and were picked up by the men in the *zarva*.<sup>94</sup> As night was approaching, the Captain tortured two Moors whom we still had on board by dropping drops of boiling oil on their skin, so that they would reveal any treachery against us. They said that orders had been given to capture us as soon as we entered the port, to avenge what we had done in Mozambique. As the torture was being applied a second time one of the Moors, even though his hands were tied, cast himself into the sea, and the other did the same during the morning watch.

That night around midnight two *almadias* with many men in them approached. The men entered the water and began swimming, while the *almadias* stood off. Some of these men headed for the *Berrio*, while others came towards the *Rafael*. Those who swam to the *Berrio* began to cut its mooring cable. The men who were standing watch at first thought they were porpoises. But after they became aware of their mistake, they shouted to the other vessels. Other swimmers had already taken hold of the foresail rigging of the *Rafael*. As they were now discovered, they silently slipped down and fled. These and many other evil acts were arranged against us by these dogs. But Our Lord did not allow them to succeed, because they did not believe in him.

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<sup>93</sup> The manuscript has *trigo tremês* or spring wheat which ripens in three months, but given the climate in Mombasa this is unlikely. Ravenstein, *Journal*, pp. 36–37 n. 2, citing Sir John Kirk, convincingly argues that this crop was sorghum (millet) or *matama* in Swahili which was traditionally exported to the Persian Gulf region.

<sup>94</sup> At this point, Da Gama had two Muslim pilots with him, the first provided by the sultan of Mozambique and the second was the 'Moor' from 'near Mecca' who had come aboard voluntarily with his son and offered his services while the fleet was anchored off the *ilha de São Jorge*. Although it appears these two men escaped, it is not clear what became of the son. Paulo da Gama had also captured four men in an *almadia* on 24 March at Mozambique. These men had originally been described as 'blacks' but they were obviously Muslims as well.

This city is large and established on high ground washed by the sea. Many ships enter its port each day. At its entrance there is a pillar, and a low lying fortress close to the sea. Those who went ashore told us that in the town they had seen many men in irons. These it seemed to us, must be Christians, because the Christians in this land are at war with the Moors.

The Christians in this city are resident merchants, who are held in much subjugation, since they cannot do more than what is ordered by the Moorish king.

It pleased God, in his mercy, that as soon as we arrived at this city, all our sick recovered their health, because the climate of this place is very good.

Even after we discussed the malice and treachery that these dogs wished to undertake against us, we still remained here on Wednesday and Thursday [11 and 12 April].

*[From Mombasa to Malindi]*

We departed in the morning [13 April] from there, with a light wind and anchored about eight leagues from Mombasa close to shore. At daybreak [14 April] we saw two boats about three leagues to the leeward at sea. We set off after them at once, in order to capture them, since we wanted to procure pilots who could take us where we desired to go. At vesper time we came up on one of the boats and we captured it. But the other escaped us heading toward land. In the one that we captured, we found seventeen men, gold, silver, much millet, other provisions, and a young woman, who was the wife of an old Moor of distinction, who was traveling here. As soon as we came up on them, they all threw themselves into the sea, but we picked them up from our boats.

That same day at sunset we dropped anchor off a place called Malindi, which is thirty leagues from Mombasa. Between Mombasa and this town of Malindi there are the following places: first Benapa, Toca, and Nuguo-Quinica.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> These places are generally accepted to have been Mtwapa, Takaungu, and Kilifi (Kioni). Cf. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 40 n 2. All of these coastal fishing villages are

## [Malindi]

On Easter Sunday [15 April] the Moors we had captured in the boat told us that at this city of Malindi there were four Christian ships, which were from India. They said that if it pleased us to take them there, they would provide Christian pilots in their place, and everything of which he had need, including meat, water, wood, and other things. The Captain major, who greatly desired to have pilots from that land, after having discussed this proposal with these Moors, dropped anchor off the town a half league from shore. The inhabitants of the town however never dared to come to our ships because they had already been warned and knew that we had captured a boat and taken Moorish prisoners.

On Monday morning [16 April], the Captain major had the old Moor<sup>96</sup> taken to a sandbank in front of the town. There, an *almadia* came for him. The Moor went to inform the king of the Captain major's wishes, that he greatly desired to make peace with him. After dinner the Moor returned in a *zarva*, in which the king had sent one of his cavaliers and a sharif, and three sheep as well. Through them, he told the captain that he would rejoice to make peace and have friendly relations with us; and that if he required anything from his land, he would give it with much good will, whether pilots or anything else.<sup>97</sup> The Captain major thereupon sent word that he intended to enter the port the following day. By these messengers he sent the king a long hood, two strings of coral, three hand wash basins, a hat, little bells, and two pieces of *lambel*.<sup>98</sup>

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located at the mouths of small rivers between Mombasa and Malindi, so it is likely that they would have attracted the attention of the author. Mtwapa at 3°55' S 39°45' E lies along Mtwapa Creek, Takaungu found at 3°41' S 39°51' E straddles Takaungu Creek and Kilifi at 3°38' S 39°51' E is located on the estuary of the Rare River along Kilifi Creek.

<sup>96</sup> This was undoubtedly the old man captured in the boat off Mombasa on the 14th April.

<sup>97</sup> As described below, the "king" was actually a son, most probably Prince Ali, who was then serving as regent for the elderly Sultan Wajraj. Both the king (1515) and Ali (1520) would subsequently send letters to king D. Manuel I in Lisbon requesting trading privileges from the Portuguese, by then firmly in control of the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean. Cf. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 44 n. 1, and F. João de Sousa, *Documentos Arábicos para a História Portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1790), p. 67.

<sup>98</sup> A type of striped cotton cloth, cf. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 41 n. 3. The term may come from the Old French *lambel* for a "narrow band or strip of cloth."

Early on Tuesday [17 April] we approached nearer to the town. The king sent the Captain six sheep, and good quantities of cloves, cumin, ginger, nutmeg, and pepper. He also sent word that Wednesday, if he desired to have a meeting with him at sea, he would come out in his *zarva*, and the Captain major could meet with him in his ship's boat.

On Wednesday [18 April] after dinner, the king came up close to our ships in a *zarva*. The Captain then embarked in his boat which was very well outfitted. When he reached the spot where the king was, the king promptly placed himself alongside him. Many kind words were then exchanged between them. Among them were these: the king invited the Captain to come with him to his house to rest, after which he would visit our ships. The Captain told him that he did not have permission from his Lord to go on land, and that, if he did, a bad report would be given of him. The king responded that if he came to our ships, what account could he give of himself to his people, and what would they say about him? He asked for the name of our king, and that it be written down for him. He also said that if we returned here he would send an ambassador, or write a letter to him.

After each had said everything they wished to say, the Captain sent for the Moors that he had taken prisoner. He then gave them all over to the king, which pleased him greatly, saying that it gave him more pleasure than if he had been given a town. Much pleased, the king walked around our ships, where many bombards were fired and he greatly enjoyed seeing them shot off. We spent three hours in this fashion. When the king departed he left one of his sons, and a sharif aboard our ships. He took two of our men to shore; who he desired to show his palaces. Moreover he told the captain that, because he did not wish to go to shore, he would return on the following day to the beach, where he would order his horsemen to demonstrate their skills.

These are the things that the king wore and brought with him: Firstly: a damask robe, trimmed with green satin, and a very rich *touca* on his head, and two bronze chairs with cushions and a round sunshade of crimson satin attached to a wooden pole. An old man attended him as his page, carrying a short sword in a silver sheath and trumpet players, and two ivory horns as tall as a man, and richly carved, these were



played by blowing in a hole they had in the middle. These horns made a pleasing harmony when played with the trumpets.<sup>99</sup>

On Thursday [19 April] the Captain major and Nicolau Coelho cruised along the shore in front of the town in their long boats with bombards placed in their sterns. There were many people lining the shore, among them two horsemen, skirmishing with each other, and greatly enjoying themselves. The king was carried in one of his palanquins down the stone steps of his palace to the side of the Captain's boat. He again asked the captain to come ashore, because he had a crippled father who wished to see him, and that he and his sons would go aboard the ships as hostages. But the Captain again excused himself.

Here we found four ships of Indian Christians. The first time they came aboard Paulo da Gama's ship, where the Captain was, they were shown an altarpiece, with Our Lady at the base of a cross holding Jesus Christ in her arms, and the apostles around her. The Indians, when they saw this altarpiece, prostrated themselves before it; and as long as we were there, they came to make their prayers and brought offerings of cloves, pepper, and other things.<sup>100</sup>

These Indians are tawny men; and wear but little clothing. They wear long beards and very long hair which they braid. They told us that they

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<sup>99</sup> A reference to the *siwa*, the ivory or copper trumpet horns that were a royal symbol for the sultans of the East Africa coast, particularly those Muslim city states ruled by descendants of the Persians of Shiraz. These instruments were usually carved with Arabic texts. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 43 includes a photograph of a *siwa* supplied to him by Sir John Kirk, the noted physician and explorer who spent more than twenty years in Zanzibar. Cf. also R.R. Marett, "The Siwa in East Africa" *Folklore* 25/4 (1914), pp. 499–503.

<sup>100</sup> It is significant that at least at the outset, both Vasco da Gama and the author believed that the Hindus they encountered on the voyage were indeed "Christians." It is not clear if their Muslim prisoners described them as such, or if the Portuguese in seeking to find Christians "beyond the land of the Moors" simply decided that since they were certainly not Muslim they were potential co-religionists. While it is possible that these ships carried St. Thomas Christians from Kerala their refusal to eat beef suggests otherwise. Barros DI C.VI (149ff.) wrote that these ships held "merchants from India" and "Banyans from Gujarat"; Castanheda LI C.XI (29–31) described them as "Indian Christians... tawny men, with good physiques, and well disposed" who when asked if they were from Calicut responded "no, that they were from another city further on called Cranganor"; and Góis PI C.XXXVIII (79) referred to them as "Indian Christians... from Cranganor [on the Malabar coast] tawny men, with long hair, dressed in Persian style."

do not eat beef. Their language is different from that of the Moors, but some of them know a little Arabic since they have constant interchange with them.

On the day when the Captain went up to the town in his boats, these Indian Christians fired many bombards from their ships; and they raised their hands when they saw him pass by, all of them shouting with much joy "Christ, Christ!"<sup>101</sup> On this day, they asked the king for permission to give us a night fete. And when night came; they heartily celebrated, and fired off many bombards, sent up rockets, and raised loud shouts.

Moreover, these Indians told the Captain major not to go ashore, and that he should not trust their displays since they came neither from the heart nor good will.

On the following Sunday, the 22nd of April, a *zarva* belonging to the king brought out one of his confidential servants. But because two days had already passed without visitors from shore, the Captain had him seized and sent word to the king that he required the pilots that he had been promised. When he received this message, the king sent a Christian pilot, and the Captain allowed the gentlemen who he had detained on the ship, to go. We were very pleased with this Christian pilot that the king had sent us.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 45 n. 1, commented on this section: "Of course they looked upon these Romish images and pictures as outlandish representations of their own gods or idols." Burton, *Camoens*, II: 420, suggested that these Hindus were actually shouting "Krishna, Krishna," the name of the eighth incarnation or *avatar* of Vishnu. It is also significant that the Indian ships carried artillery.

<sup>102</sup> The identity of this "Christian" pilot has been the subject of much debate. Barros DI C.VI (151) described him as "a Moor, a Gujarati, called Malemo Caná"; Castanheda LI C.XII (33) refers to him as "a Gujarati pilot called Canaqua"; while Góis PI C.XXXVIII (81) called him "a good Muslim Gujarati pilot, by the name of Malemocanaqua." For much of the 20th century, thanks largely to the archival work of the French Orientalist Gabriel Ferrand and the Russian Orientalist I.J. Kratchkovsky, there was the belief that this pilot may have been the celebrated Arab navigator Shihab al-Din Ahmed ibn Majid al-Najdi. But more recent work by Ibrahim Khoury, Luís de Albuquerque, and contemporary letters written from Lisbon to Florence immediately following Da Gama's return, letters which suggest this pilot returned with him, have discredited this view. The controversy is most succinctly discussed in Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend*, pp. 121–128. The true identity of "Malemo Caná may never be determined. It is very likely that he was a Muslim from Gujarat, who had made the voyage between western India and East Africa many times. It is possible, although much less likely,

We learned at this time that the island, of which we had heard in Mozambique as being inhabited by Christians, is in fact an island where the same king of Mozambique rules, and half of it belongs to the Moors and the other half to Christians. On this island there are many seed pearls. The name of the island is Quiloa.<sup>103</sup> It was here that the Moorish pilots wanted to take us, and we also wished to go there, for we believed that it was as they had described it.

This town of Malindi lies on a bay, and extends along the beach. The town may be likened to Alcochete.<sup>104</sup> The houses are high and very well whitewashed, and they have many windows. Along the inland side of the town, which is tightly packed with houses, there is a large palm grove; and the surrounding lands are planted with millet and other vegetables.

We remained in front of this town for nine days, and all during these nine days we had fetes, sham skirmishes on foot, and many musical performances.<sup>105</sup>

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that following the lexicon of the author, he may have been a “Christian”, that is to say a Hindu from Gujarat. Ravenstein, *Journal*, pp. 45–46 n. 3, argued that Malema was a corruption of the Arabic Mallim for “master or teacher”, while Canaqua (Kanaka) was either the name of his caste or a term used for sailing master.

<sup>103</sup> Kilwa

<sup>104</sup> Alcochete is a town on the southern bank of the Tagus estuary. As noted above, this passage is one that has traditionally been cited as evidence that Alvaro Velho, who was evidently from the nearby town of Barreiro, is indeed the author of the *Journal*.

<sup>105</sup> From the 13th through the 23rd April.

## ACROSS THE ARABIAN SEA

### [*Malindi to Calicut*]

On Tuesday, which was the 24th of this month, we departed from here, with the pilot the king had given us. We made for a city called Calicut, *on which the king had information*,<sup>1</sup> and headed east in search of it.

The coast runs north and south, since the land there encloses a great bay and strait.<sup>2</sup> According to what we were told, in this bay there are many cities of Christians and Moors, including one called Cambay,<sup>3</sup> and six hundred known islands, and within it the Red Sea and the house of Mecca.

The following Sunday [29 April] we again saw the North Star, which we had not seen for a long time.<sup>4</sup>

On a Friday, which was the 18th day of May,<sup>5</sup> we sighted lofty mountains,<sup>6</sup> it having been twenty three days without seeing land. During all

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<sup>1</sup> This important phase suggests that the letter from Pedro da Covilhã from Cairo had indeed reached Lisbon and the king. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 45, did not include this phase in his translation.

<sup>2</sup> The “bay” here is the Arabian Sea, and the “strait” was that of Bab el Mandeb (“Gate of Tears”) at the mouth of the Red Sea.

<sup>3</sup> The Gulf of Cambay, and the city of that name, both in the Muslim sultanate of Gujarat were the loci of a flourishing trade in cotton textiles and other goods carried on between the west coast of India, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, East Africa, and Melaka in Malaysia. Cf. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, translated and edited by M.L. Dames (2 vols., London, 1918), I: 108–45; M.N. Pearson “Commerce and Compulsion: Gujarati Merchants and the Portuguese System in Western India, 1500–1600” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1971) and *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: The Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century* (London and Berkeley, 1976); and Edward A. Alpers, “Gujarat and the Trade of East Africa, c. 1500–1800” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* IX (1976), pp. 22–44.

<sup>4</sup> Da Gama and his men lost sight of Polaris or the North Star south of Santiago in late July and probably sighted it again at about 2° N latitude.

<sup>5</sup> The manuscript states the 17th but this was an error of the author or the copyist since Friday fell on the 18th that year.

<sup>6</sup> This *terra alta* that the Portuguese first sighted was probably Mount Eli (Dely) which rises to 286 m or 938 feet in northern Kerala about 17 miles or 27 km north of Cannanore (Kannur) found at 11°52′ N 75°21′ E.

these days we sailed with the wind behind us, so that the shortest distance we could have covered on this crossing was six hundred leagues.<sup>7</sup> We found ourselves eight leagues from land, when we first sighted it. We launched the lead and found forty five fathoms. That same night we shaped a course to the SSW to move away from the coast. The next day [19 May], we again approached the land. But we could not come close enough to it due to heavy rain and thunderstorms which prevailed for our pilot to be able to fix our exact location as we sailed along the coast. On Sunday [20 May] we found ourselves close to some mountains, as high as we had ever seen, which are close to the city of Calicut.<sup>8</sup> And when we were near enough to them for the pilot with us to recognize them, he told us that this was the country where we desired to go. On this day, in the afternoon, we anchored two leagues *to the north* of the city. We did so because our pilot mistook a town found there called Capua<sup>9</sup> for Calicut. North of this town is another one called Pandarane,<sup>10</sup> and we anchored along the coast about a league and a half from shore.

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<sup>7</sup> On this voyage, the fleet probably sailed for 30 leagues parallel to the coast north of Malindi (found at 3°13' S) for several days before heading NE. From 24 April until 18 May would be twenty-five days inclusive, but the author may be referring to the days of the actual crossing from the departure from the African coast until the sighting of the coast of India. The author's statement that the fleet had made at least 600 leagues or 1918 nautical miles was not quite accurate, the actual distance from Malindi to the Indian coast near Mount Eli is closer to 2220 nautical miles or ca. 694 leagues.

<sup>8</sup> These were the Western Ghats. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 47 n. 6, suggested that this is a reference to Cotta Point or Cape Kadalur found at 11°28' N 75°38' E, the "Monte Formosa" of later Portuguese maps, located about 15 miles NNW of Calicut. The southwest monsoon, bringing heavy rains, reaches the Kerala coast in late May and continues through September.

<sup>9</sup> This village was Kappatt or Kappattangadi found at 11°35' N 75°73' E, about 19 km north of Calicut at the mouth of the Elattūr river. Barros DI C.VIII (156) and Castanheda LI C.XIII (33) called it "Capocate." Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 48, began this sentence "that night" although the manuscript reads "*à tarde*." The manuscript also states that the fleet anchored "*abaixo*" or below the city but in the nautical phraseology of the fifteenth and sixteenth this term instead of south actually meant north. One explanation for this fact relates to the famous world map completed by the Venetian Camaldolese monk cartographer Fra Mauro in 1459 for Afonso V of Portugal and his uncle Prince Henry the Navigator. This circular planisphere had inverted north and south following the Arab mapmaking tradition instead of the Ptolemaic one. In any case, Ravenstein did not include this phrase in his translation.

<sup>10</sup> Pantalayini-Kollam about 14 miles north of Calicut. Góis PI C.XXXIX (82) and Castanheda LI C.XV called it Pandarane.

## [Calicut]

After we anchored, four boats appeared from shore. They came out in order to find out who we were. We told them and they pointed out Calicut<sup>11</sup> to us.

On the following day [21 May], these same boats came alongside our ships again. The Captain major sent one of the convict-exiles to Calicut;<sup>12</sup> and those with whom he went took him to a place where there were two Moors from Tunis, who knew how to speak Castilian and Genoese.<sup>13</sup>

The first greeting they gave him, was this that follows:

“The Devil take thee! What brought you hither?”

They asked him what he sought so far from home and he answered them:

“We come in search of Christians and spices.”

And they said to him:

“Why does not the king of Castile, the king of France, or the Signoria of Venice send [men] here?”

And he answered them that the king of Portugal would not consent to their sending [anyone] here. And they said that he had done well.

Then they welcomed him and gave him wheat bread with honey to eat; and after he ate, he returned to the ships. One of the Moors came with him, who, as soon as he was aboard the ships, began to say these words:

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<sup>11</sup> Kozhikode in Malayalam found at 11°25' N 75°77' E. Calicut is the Anglicized version of the Arabic Kalikut.

<sup>12</sup> According to Gaspar Correia's *The Three Voyages*, p. 159, this man was called João Nũz (Nunez) or João Martins.

<sup>13</sup> One of these “Moors” from Tunis is called Monçaide by Barros DI C.VIII (157) and Góis PI C.XXXIX (82). Castanheda L.I C.XV (39) referred to him as Bôtaibo. These “Moors” may have been Andalusí Muslims who had fled from the sultanate of Granada during the war with Ferdinand and Isabella from ca. 1482–1492.

"A lucky venture! A lucky venture! Plenty of rubies, plenty of emeralds, many thanks you owe to God for bringing you to a country where there are such riches!"

For us, this was truly amazing, that we were hearing him speak and we could not believe it: that men found so far from Portugal could understand our language!<sup>14</sup>

This city of Calicut is inhabited by Christians. The men have tawny complexions, and some of them have big beards and long hair, while others shave their heads and other clip it short. On the top of their heads they retain a tuft of hair as a sign that they are Christians, and also wear moustaches, and they piece their ears and in the holes wear much gold. They go naked above the waist: and below it wear pieces of very fine cotton cloth. Those who go thus clothed are the most respectable; the others wearing whatever they are able.

Generally the women of this country are ugly and short in stature, and wear much gold jewelry around their necks, and many bracelets on their arms; and on their toes they wear rings set with precious stones.

All of these people are of good status and appear agreeable. They are men that, at first sight appear to know little<sup>15</sup> and seem very covetous.

At the time when we arrived at this city of Calicut, the king was fifteen leagues away.<sup>16</sup> The Captain major sent two men there, with a message from him stating that an ambassador from the king of Portugal had

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<sup>14</sup> This initial exchange in India clearly demonstrates the intercontinental dimensions of the spice trade long in advance of the arrival of the Portuguese. Nevertheless, the passage also reveals the relief of the author and his companions in finding that a mix of Portuguese and Castilian, supplemented by Arabic, could henceforth serve their linguistic needs along the Malabar coast.

<sup>15</sup> In the manuscript, *segundo a primeira face, sabem pouco e são muito cobiçosos*. Ravenstein *Journal*, p. 50, translated this passage as "At first sight they seem covetous and ignorant." The rather obscure *segundo a primeira face* may derive from the Latin *prima facie* "on its first appearance."

<sup>16</sup> According to Góis PI C.XXXIX (82) and Castanheda LI C. XV (40) the "king" was then at Panane or Ponnani. This coastal town found at 10°46' N 75°54' E is about 28 miles south of Calicut and had long been an important trading center.

arrived, and that he carried letters from him; and, if he desired it, he would carry them to where the king was.<sup>17</sup>

The king, when he received the Captain's message, gave a gift of very fine cloth to the two men who carried it to him. He also sent word to the Captain bidding him welcome, and [saying] that he would soon return to Calicut. In fact, he soon departed with a large retinue.

He also sent us, with our two men, a pilot who had orders to bring us to a place called Pandarane, below the place where we had first anchored (at this time we were actually in front of the city of Calicut). There was a good anchorage there, where we should moor the ships, especially since where we were had a bad anchorage with a stony bottom. In fact, this was true. Moreover, it was customary for ships which came to this country to anchor there, for the sake of safety. The Captain, in light of this message from the king, and the fact that we were not well anchored, ordered that we set sail. And we went to anchor at that port [27 May]. But we did not anchor as close to the shore as the king's pilot desired.

After we were secured and moored at that place, a message came for the Captain major, from the king, as he was already in the city. The king also sent a man, whom they call *bale*,<sup>18</sup> (who is like an *alcaide* and always attended by two hundred men armed with swords and shields) to Pandarane, along with other men of distinction in order to conduct the Captain major to where the king awaited him. As it was late that day when the message arrived, the Captain did not wish to go.

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<sup>17</sup> According to Góis PI C.XXXIX (82) and Castanheda LI C.XV (40), Fernão Martins and Monçaide were the two men that Vasco da Gama sent to Ponnani.

<sup>18</sup> The term *Bale* came from the Arabic *wali* or governor which roughly equates to the Portuguese *alcaide*. He was the chief civilian official for the "king." Barros, Castanheda and Góis all used the term *Catual* for this official in their accounts. This term is a Portuguese corruption of the Perso-Arabic *kotwâl* for warden or fort commander (*kot* = fort, *wâl* = keeper). Correia, *The Three Voyages*, p. 160, used the term *gozil* which is a corruption of the Arabic *wazīr* = minister. Cf. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 51 n. 1, Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend*, p. 131 n. 59, and Herculano *Roteiro*, p. 54.



*[First Audience with the Samorin]<sup>19</sup>*

On the following morning, which was Monday, the 28th of May, the Captain set out to speak with the king. He took with him, of his, thirteen men, of whom I was one.<sup>20</sup> We all departed in our best attire, and carried bombards in our boats, and trumpets and many flags. As soon as the Captain landed, he was received by the *alcaide*, accompanied by many men; some armed, others not. They received the captain with much pleasure and hospitality, as if they were pleased to see us. Even though, at the outset, they appeared threatening, because they carried drawn swords in their hands. They provided the Captain major with a palanquin, in which men of distinction are accustomed to travel in this country; and some merchants as well, who if they want one, must pay for the privilege. The Captain entered the palanquin, which was carried by six men taking turns. And we departed, attended by all these people on the road to Calicut. From here [Pandaran] we went through another town called Capua.<sup>21</sup> There, the Captain major was given a respite at the house of a man, and we were given something to eat; which was rice, with much butter, and very good boiled fish. But the Captain did not wish to eat there. After we had eaten, the Captain major embarked on a river, which was close by, and flows between the

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<sup>19</sup> The term Samorin or Zamorin used by the Portuguese for the “king” of Calicut was a corruption of Samudrī Raja or Samudrāthiri (Samoothiri) Raja, Malayalam from Sanskrit for “one who has the sea for his borders” or “lord of the sea.” The kingdom of Calicut (Nediyirippu Swarupam), ruled by descendants of the Perumal dynasty, had been founded in the 13th century from the remnants of the Kulasekhara empire in northern Kerala. By the time of Vasco da Gama’s arrival, the Zamorin’s power extended over coastal Kerala north from Cochin (Kochi) to Pantalayini-Kollam. Raja Manavikrama (r. 1466–1474) in particular had forced many *nāduvalis* or petty chieftains to accept his suzerainty.

<sup>20</sup> As noted above, this statement has traditionally served as the basis for “discovering,” by the process of elimination, the identity of the author of the *Roteiro*. Castanheda LI C.XVI (42–43) stated that only twelve men accompanied da Gama and provided the names of six: Diogo Dias (scribe for Vasco da Gama), Fernão Martins (interpreter), João de Sá (scribe for Paulo da Gama); Gonçalo Pires (sailor and retainer of Vasco da Gama); Alvaro Velho (soldier); and Alvaro de Braga (scribe of Nicolau Coelho). He also noted that Vasco da Gama’s *veador* (comptroller) accompanied this group but did not name him. Correia, although his account is less reliable, gave the names of two others João de Setubal and João Palha. For some reason Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 51 n. 2, did not include Fernão Martins in his list. Da Gama gave orders for Paulo da Gama and Coelho to sail for Portugal if some disaster befell him. Coelho was also instructed to wait with the ship’s boats on shore for his return.

<sup>21</sup> Kappatt, cf. n. 151.

sea and the mainland, along the coast.<sup>22</sup> The two boats in which we embarked were tied together so that we could proceed together. Beyond the many other boats in which the numerous other men embarked; of those going along the banks, I will not say anything. Their number was infinite, and they had all come to see us. We proceeded on that river for about a league; where we saw many large and stout ships, which were beached along its banks, since there is no port here.

After we had disembarked, the Captain major returned to his palanquin, and we continued along our route. There were so many people, who had come to see us, that we could not count them. Even the women came out of their houses, with children in their arms, and followed us.

[A 'Christian' Church]

Here [Calicut] they took us to a large church in which we found the following things:

First, the body of the church is as large as a monastery; all built of hewn stone, and roofed with tiles. The main doorway had a bronze pillar, as high as a mast. On top of this pillar sat a bird, apparently a cock, and another pillar as high as a man, and very stout. In the center of the body of the church is a round chapel, all of hewn stone, which had a bronze door wide enough for a man to fit through, and stone steps leading up to it. And inside this chapel was a small image, which they said represented Our Lady.<sup>23</sup> In front of the main doorway along the

<sup>22</sup> The Elattūr River.

<sup>23</sup> In accordance with their view of the Hindus they had encountered in Malindi, the Portuguese at least 'officially' continued to believe that they were dealing with a form of "Eastern Christianity" at this point. The temple they visited was probably a Vaishnava temple given the bird like Garuda figure, Vishnu's vehicle, found on the "pillar" (*stambha* or *skambha*) outside. Cf. Subrahmanyam, *Career and Legend*, p. 132. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 52 n. 3, argued that bird at the top of the pillar was the symbol of the Hindu War God Subraimainar. As for the small image of "Our Lady" Góis PI C.XL (85) wrote that although the Portuguese could not enter that inner sanctum and see this image well, the priests that did began to chant "Mary, Mary", at which point the "Catal and Naires prostrated themselves and began to pray, while the Portuguese knelt before this image of the "Virgin Mary." Burton suggested that this image was Gauri, the young, pure "white" goddess, who as Parvati became the good hearted mother goddess (Devi) and consort of Shiva. Ravenstein, *Journal*, pp. 53–54 n. 2, suggested that this image may also have been of Krishna and his mother Devaki or

walls, were seven small bells. Here [in the church] the Captain major said his prayers, and we with him.<sup>24</sup>

We did not enter this chapel,<sup>25</sup> because their custom is that only certain men, who serve the churches may enter. These men are called “quafees”.<sup>26</sup> These *quafees* wore some threads over the shoulder (the left shoulder) and under the shoulder of the right arm, as our evangelical clergy wear the stole.<sup>27</sup> They threw holy water over us and gave us white ashes which the Christians of this country are in the habit of putting on their foreheads, breasts, around the neck and their upper arms. They performed this entire ceremony on the Captain, and gave him the ashes to put on. The Captain took them, and gave them to someone to watch over, giving them to understand that he would put them on later.<sup>28</sup>

Many, many other saints were painted on the walls of the church, wearing crowns. But their painting was in a different style, because their teeth were so large that they protruded an inch from their mouths, and each saint had four or five arms. Below this church there was a large masonry tank, similar to many others we had seen along the road.<sup>29</sup>

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even of a local deity in Calicut called Māri or Māriamma (“mother Māri”) the dreaded goddess of small pox.

<sup>24</sup> These bells are struck by the Brahmins as they enter the temple. Castanheda L.I C. XVI (44–45) stated that during these prayers, João de Sá “who was dubious about whether that church was indeed Christian” knelt next to Vasco da Gama and said “if this is the devil, I worship the true God.” The Captain-major then smiled. As noted above, this incident has traditionally been used to exclude de Sá from the authorship of the *Roteiro* since the manuscript expresses no such doubts about this “Christian” church.

<sup>25</sup> The author here used the term *coruchéo* = spire but then called it a *capela* or chapel. Moreover, Góis PI C.XL (84) also referred to it as a *capella redonda* = “round chapel.” This inner room, the *garbhagrha* (“womb room”) or *sanctum sanctorum* held the image of the temple deity.

<sup>26</sup> Since the Portuguese were then conversing in Arabic through Fernão Martins, it is likely that this term for the Brahmin priests came either from the Arabic *qadi* or *qazi* = judge or *kāfir* = unbeliever, which would have expressed the Muslim view toward these Hindus.

<sup>27</sup> This “stole” was the *yajñopavitam* or sacred thread worn by the three highest Hindu castes or *varnas*: the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas.

<sup>28</sup> This “white” ash or *vibhuti* (“holy ash”) is obtained by burning cow dung, ghee, herbs and other ingredients in a sacrificial fire or *Homa*. The fact that Vasco da Gama refused to put these ashes on may reflect that he had already decided that these “Christians” were not in fact of his own faith.

<sup>29</sup> Temple tanks or *kunds* were common and used for ritual and curative bathing.

And from there, we departed. At the entrance to the city we were taken to another [church], which had the same things as described above. Here the crowd that came to see us grew so dense, that we could hardly continue on by that road. After going along this street a bit, they put the Captain in a house, and we others with him, because of this huge crowd.

The king then sent a brother of the *bale*, who was a great Lord in this country. He came here to accompany the Captain. He brought many men beating drums, and blowing on *anafils*, and thin flutes, and a matchlock, that was fired off before us. And thus they conducted the Captain with much respect, even more than is shown in Spain to a king.

The crowd was so great that one could not count it, and the roofs and houses were totally filled. Excluding those surrounding us; among this number there were at least two thousand armed men.

And the closer we came to reaching the king's palace, the greater the crowd grew. When we arrived at the palace, men of distinction and great Lords came out to meet the captain, and joined the many others that were already accompanying him. It was an hour before sunset when we reached the palace. We entered by a gate into a great courtyard. Before we reached the place where the king was, we passed through four doors, which we had to force our way through, giving many blows to the people. When we reached the final door, behind which was the king, a short old man came out, whose position was like that of a bishop, and who governs for the king in religious matters. He embraced the Captain at the entrance of this door. Several men were wounded, and we only entered this door by using much force.

The king<sup>30</sup> was in a small court,<sup>31</sup> reclining on a couch, which had these things: A cloth of green velvet below, and on it a very good mattress; and covering that a sheet of very fine and delicate cotton cloth, finer

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<sup>30</sup> The ruling Samorin was then Mānavikraman Raja.

<sup>31</sup> The word used here is *patim*. Over the years, this term has been rendered as "small chamber", "platform", and "dais." It appears that it should be translated as "small court" or even "courtyard." Barros DI C.VIII (158) used the term *patio de alpendres*; while Castanheda LI C.XVII (45–46) also used *patio*.

than any linen, it also had cushions of the same fashion. He held, in his left hand, a very large golden cup, with the height of a half *almude* jug, and the width of two palms at its mouth, and it appeared very heavy. Into this cup he threw the husks of a certain herb which the men of this country chew for its calming effect, which they call *atambor*.<sup>32</sup> On his right side stood a basin of gold, so large that a man might just encircle it with his arms, in which these herbs were kept, and many silver jugs, and the canopy above was all gilt.

Upon entering, the Captain paid his respects, according to the customs of this country, which was by putting his hands together, and raising them toward heaven, as is done by Christians when addressing God; and then as they lift them by opening and closing the fists very rapidly. The king gestured to the Captain with his right hand, to come underneath the enclosure where he was sitting. However, the Captain did not approach him, because it is the custom of this country that no man may approach the king, save only the servant who hands him the herbs. And, when anyone addresses him, he must hold his hand before his mouth, and keep his distance. As he beckoned to the Captain, the king looked at the rest of us, and ordered us to be seated on a stone bench near him, where he could see us. He then ordered that we should be given water for our hands, and that fruit be brought to us. One type resembled a melon, except that the outside was rough, but the inside was sweet. Another fruit, which resembled a fig, tasted very nice; and there were men who cut them for us.<sup>33</sup> The king watched while we were eating, and smiled at us. Then he spoke with his servant who was by his side giving him these herbs to chew.

After this, he looked over at the Captain, who was seated facing him. He told him that he could address the courtiers present, who were men of much distinction, and that he could tell them whatsoever he wished, and that they would repeat it to him. The Captain major replied that

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<sup>32</sup> This was the betel nut, the fruit of the Betel Palm (*Areca Catechu*). This is sliced, and then the husk is wrapped in the leaf of the Betel Pepper (*Piper betle*) mixed with lime and other ingredients and chewed for its narcotic effect. The word *Atambor* can be traced to the Sanskrit *tāmbūla* for betel, and the Indo-Persian *tāmbūl* and Arabic *al-tambūl* equivalents.

<sup>33</sup> The melon type fruit was probably the jack (in Portuguese *jaca*) from the tree *Artocarpus integrifolia* which is indigenous to southwestern India. The fig-like fruit was the banana from the plant *musa paradisiaca*.

he was the ambassador from the king of Portugal, and that he was the bearer of a message, which he could only share with him [the king.] The king said this was fine, and immediately ordered that he be brought to an inner chamber. Once he had entered, the king rose from where he was seated, and joined the Captain.<sup>34</sup> We remained where we were. All of this happened around sunset. As soon as the king rose, one old man who was in the courtyard, took away the couch, but the plate remained there. The king, when he joined the Captain, threw himself onto another couch, on which there was much fabric embroidered in gold, and asked the Captain a question: "What is it you want?"

The Captain told him he was the ambassador of the king of Portugal, who was Lord of many lands, and exceedingly rich in all things, more than any king in these parts. And that for sixty years the kings, his ancestors, had sent out ships each year to make discoveries in the direction of these parts, as they knew that like themselves, there were Christian kings here. And for this reason they ordered this land to be discovered, and not because they needed either gold or silver, since they possessed these things in such abundance that it was not necessary to procure them from this land. These captains embarked and traveled for a year or two, until their provisions ran out, and without finding anything, they returned to Portugal. Now there was a king, who was called D. Manuel, who had ordered these three ships built, and who had appointed him Captain Major of them; and who instructed him not to return to Portugal, until he had discovered the king of the Christians. If he returned sooner, he would order his head cut off. And if he found him, he should give him two letters, which he would give him the following day. Moreover he had been ordered to inform him, by word of mouth, that he [D. Manuel] desired to be his brother and friend.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Góis PI C.XLI (87), in a passage which seems logical and credible, stated that Fernão Martins accompanied da Gama into this inner chamber to translate, while the Samorin entered with his chief Brahmin (*Bramana mor*), his betel carrier, his chief factor (*veador da fazenda*) and an interpreter.

<sup>35</sup> Barros DI C.VIII (159), Góis PI C.XLI (87) and Castanheda C.XVII (47–48) all mention these letters from D. Manuel, one in Portuguese and other in Arabic, which da Gama had carried with him from Lisbon. Unfortunately, neither these letters nor copies of them have survived. In stark contrast, Correia's *The Three Voyages*, pp. 172–73, rather bizarrely suggests that Vasco and Paulo da Gama wrote these letters for the king while anchored off Calicut.

The king then replied to this, saying that he was welcome, and that on his part he considered him a brother and a friend. He said that he would send ambassadors to Portugal with him; the Captain saying likewise he would ask this favor, seeing that he would not dare to present himself before the king his Lord, if he did not present some men of this country.

These and many other things passed between the two in this chamber. As it was already late in the night, the king asked: "With whom do you wish to lodge? With Christians, or with Moors?" And the Captain replied, neither with Christians nor with Moors, and asked as a favor that he be given lodging by himself where no one else would be present. The king said that he would order it so. With this, the Captain took leave of the king, and came to be with us, where we then were, on a veranda, illuminated by a large bronze candlestick. By then easily four hours of the night had already passed.<sup>36</sup>

So all of us went with the Captain on the road to our lodgings, and a countless crowd accompanied us. And the rain poured down so heavily, that the streets ran with water! The Captain traveled on the back of six men<sup>37</sup> [in a palanquin]; and we walked so far through the city that the Captain grew tired of the journey, and complained to a Moor of distinction, the king's factor, who was accompanying him to his lodgings. The Moor then took him to his own house, entering a courtyard within it; in which there was a veranda roofed with tiles, on which many carpets had been spread, and two candlesticks, like those of the king; very large; and at the top of these were large iron lamps alight, fueled with oil or butter. There were four wicks for each lamp, which therefore produced much light; and these same lamps are used instead of torches.

This same Moor had a horse brought for the captain to ride to his lodgings; but it came without a saddle, and the Captain did not wish

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<sup>36</sup> That is to say about four hours after sunset or about 10P.M.

<sup>37</sup> The manuscript reads *seos homens*. Neves Águas p. 86 has *dos seus homens* (of his men) for this passage, but given the earlier reference to six men carrying the palanquin into town, *seis* seems correct here.

to mount it.<sup>38</sup> We then started on the way to the lodgings. When we arrived, we found some of our men [from the ships] already there, with the Captain's bed and other things which he had brought to present to the king.

[Presents for the Samorin]

On Tuesday [29 May] the Captain had these things prepared to send to the king, namely:<sup>39</sup> twelve pieces of *lambel*, four scarlet hoods, six hats, four strings of coral, a bundle of hand wash basins, in which there were six, a case of sugar, and four full barrels, two with oil and two with honey. Because here it is the custom not to bring the king anything without the prior knowledge of the Moor, his factor, and then of the *bale*, the Captain made known his intentions to them. They came and began to laugh at these presents, saying that they were not fit to send to the king, that the poorest<sup>40</sup> merchant from Mecca or any other part of India, would give more than this. [They said] if he wanted to make such a present he should send some gold, as the king would not accept such things. The Captain, when he heard this, became melancholy. He replied that he did not bring any gold, and that he was no merchant, but an ambassador. He told them of that which he brought, he would give, which was his gift, and not that of his king.<sup>41</sup> If and when the king of Portugal ordered him to return, he would provide him with many other things, and far richer presents. If the Samorin king<sup>42</sup> would not accept these things, he would send them back to the ships. They

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<sup>38</sup> According to Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 60 n. 1, in the late 19th century, it was still common practice in Calicut to ride horses without a saddle. Therefore, this offer was not intended as a social slight or insult to da Gama.

<sup>39</sup> In the manuscript the Latin abbreviation .s. is used, for *scilicet*.

<sup>40</sup> In the manuscript *probe*; this is a common metathesis for *pobre* = poor.

<sup>41</sup> There is little doubt that da Gama reached India with presents that were wholly inadequate for the task at hand. Such gifts were crucial to cultivating a relationship with the Samorin, who had traditionally received lavish presents from the diverse merchant groups doing business in Calicut. It is also clear that the merchandise the Portuguese carried had little appeal in Indian markets.

<sup>42</sup> In the manuscript, *El Rei Çamolim*. Following da Gama's audience the previous day, this is the first reference, if slightly corrupted, to the formal title Samudri Raja. The chroniclers also refer to this title: Barros DI CVIII (157ff.) used the term Samori; Góis PI C. XLI (88) utilized Çamori; while Castanheda LI C. XVIII (35) used Çamorin adding "which in their language means emperor."



declared that they would not dispatch these presents, nor consent to him forwarding them on his own.

The Captain, seeing their determination not to send his presents, said that, as they would not allow him to send them to the king, he wished to go and speak with him, and then return to his ships. They replied that this was fine. If he would wait a short time, they would go negotiate a bit, and return for him soon to accompany him to the palace. The Captain remained for the rest of that day, waiting, but they never returned. The Captain was therefore irritated to find himself among men who were so phlegmatic and unreliable. He intended to go himself to the palace without them; however, he decided on further reflection to wait until the following day. Nevertheless, we did not despair. Instead we diverted ourselves, singing, and dancing to the sound of the trumpets, and we enjoyed ourselves greatly.

*[A Second Audience with the Samorin]*

When Wednesday morning [30 May] came, the Moors returned and brought the captain to the palace, and we others with him. The palace was crowded with armed men. The Captain waited with those who brought him for four long hours outside a door which they would not open. Finally, the king sent word that he might enter, but he could not bring more than two men with him; whom he might select to accompany him. The Captain said that he wished to enter with Fernão Martins, who knew how to speak [Arabic], and his scribe.<sup>43</sup> It seemed to him and to us as well, that this separation portended no good.

When he entered, the king told him that he had waited on Tuesday thinking he was going to see him. The Captain replied that he had tired on the road, and for this reason had not come to see him. The king then said: that he said he came from a very rich kingdom and yet had

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<sup>43</sup> The scribe or secretary of the *São Gabriel* was Diogo Dias, the brother of Bartolomeu Dias. In 1502, Martins received a grant from the Crown for his services as an "Arabic interpreter" on the voyage. Cf. ANTT *Chancelarias Reais* (Manuel I) *Livro* 6, fo. 121, published in Jacinto Inácio Brito Rebello, "Navegadores e exploradores portugueses até o XVI século (Documentos para a sua historia: Vasco da Gama, sua família, suas viagens, seus companheiros)" *Revista de Educação e Ensino* (Lisbon) 13 (1898)," Document 21, pp. 68–69, cited in Subrahmanyam, *Career and Legend*, p. 81 n. 8.

brought nothing of value; and that he had also said that he brought a letter, but he had not presented it. To this, the Captain responded that he had brought nothing, because he had come for nothing save to discover, and that, when they returned with other ships, then he would see what they brought him. As for the letter which he had told him he had brought, this was true, and he would deliver it at once.

Then king then asked: what is it that you have come to discover, stones or men? If he came to discover men, as he said, why had he brought nothing? Moreover, he had been told that he carried a Santa Maria made of gold! The Captain said that the Santa Maria, which he brought, was not made of gold, and that even if she were made of gold, he would not part with her, as she had guided him across the ocean, and would guide him back to his own country. The king then asked for the letter that he carried. The Captain said that he would beg him for a favor, as the Moors wished him harm and would misinterpret him: that he order a Christian called for who knew how to speak the Arabic of the Moors. The king said this was fine, and at once he sent for a young man, short in stature, who they called "Quaram." The Captain then stated that he carried two letters: one was written in his language, and the other, in the Moorish one. The one in his own language he understood very well, and he knew that its contents would prove acceptable, but he could not understand the other. Thus it might be good, or it could contain something erroneous. And because the Christian was not able to read Moorish, four Moors took the letter and read it among themselves, and then came to read it before the king; who was happy with its contents.

He asked the Captain what kind of merchandise was to be found in his country. The Captain said that there was much wheat,<sup>44</sup> cloth, iron, bronze, and many other things. The king then asked him if he brought any merchandise with him. He replied that he brought a little of each of these things as samples, and that if given permission he would return to the ships and order it landed. Meanwhile four or five men would remain at the lodgings. But the king said no. Instead, he might go and take all his men with him, and he should order his ships moored securely, and

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<sup>44</sup> In the manuscript *trigo*, which Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 63, translated as "corn." While this crop may have reached Portugal by the time of da Gama's departure, thanks to Columbus, its cultivation was still in its infancy.

he should land his merchandise, and sell it at the best price he could. After the Captain took his leave of the king, he returned to his lodgings, and we all accompanied him. As it was already late, the Captain did not concern himself with departing that night.

[Return and Detention at Pandarane]

When Thursday morning came [31 May], they brought the Captain a horse without a saddle. The Captain refused to ride it, and asked that they bring a horse of the country, that is to say a palanquin, because he would not mount a horse without a saddle. And so he was taken to the house of a very wealthy merchant, by the name of Guzerate,<sup>45</sup> who ordered one of these palanquins readied. When it was prepared, the Captain departed in it at once. He was accompanied by many men on the road to Pandarane, where our ships were anchored. But we others not being able to keep up with him, fell a good deal behind. As we were thus proceeding, the *bale* came up and passed by us, to join the Captain ahead. We lost our way and wandered far inland; but the *bale* sent a man after us, who put us on the right road. When we reached Pandarane, we found the Captain irritated, and inside<sup>46</sup> a rest house,<sup>47</sup> of which there are many along these roads, where the travelers and pedestrians shelter themselves from the rains.

The *bale* and many other men were with the Captain. Upon our arrival, the Captain asked the *bale* to provide an *almadia*, so we might go out to our ships. He and the others said that as it was already late (in fact the sun had already set), and that he should go the next day. The Captain told them that if they did not provide it, he would return to the king, who had ordered him taken back to the ships, and that instead they wanted to detain him. This was badly done, seeing he was a Christian like them. When they saw that the Captain had become displeased, they

<sup>45</sup> The author here confused the ethnic and regional background of this merchant, a "Gujarati", for a personal name.

<sup>46</sup> In the manuscript *dente* for *doente* which here means "irritated" or "bad-tempered." In some cases, this word has been read as *dentro* = inside, so the phrase has been rendered simply "we found the captain inside a rest-house" thus losing some of the original meaning. Cf. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 64, Herculano, *Roteiro*, p. 68; Fontoura da Costa *Journal*, p. 52.

<sup>47</sup> *Estau* in the manuscript. According to Herculano, *Roteiro*, pp. 68–69, this was a type of *estalagem* = inn where travelers could rest or spend the night.

told him he could depart, and that they would give him thirty *almadias*, if that many were needed. They then took us along the beach; and the Captain, believing that they had some evil design, sent three men ahead. He told them that if they found the ship's boats and his brother there that he should hide himself. They went and found nothing and turned back. But as they took us in a different direction, we were not able to come across each other.

As it was already late in the night, they then took us to the house of a Moor. When we arrived there, they told us that they wished to go in search of the three men, who had not yet returned to us. While they were gone, the Captain ordered many chickens and much rice purchased, and we ate, even though we were very tired from walking for the entire day.

Those who had gone out to search [for the three men], only returned in the morning [1 June]. The Captain said that it now seemed that they were well intentioned. Because that which they had done, in not allowing us to depart the previous night, they did because it seemed to them that they were doing us a good service. On the other hand, despite this, we all harbored ill suspicions toward them, and their actions seemed evil to us based on what had happened to us during the past days in Calicut. During the day when they returned, the Captain again asked that they provide boats to take us to the ships. They all began to whisper among themselves, and said that he should order his ships to come closer to shore, and that then he could go out to his ships. The Captain replied that if he ordered the ships to approach, it would seem to his brother that they had taken him prisoner, and that he had been compelled to give this order. His brother would then hoist the sails and go back to Portugal. They said that if he did not order the ships to come closer to shore, he would not be permitted to go out to them in any fashion. The Captain then said that the Samorin king had ordered him back to his ships but they would not permit him to go, as the king had ordered. Therefore, he should return to the king, since he was a Christian like him. If the king did not permit him to go, and wanted him to remain in his country, he would remain with much pleasure. They said yes, that he could go. However, they did not give him the opportunity to do so. All the doors where we were being held were immediately closed, and many armed men came inside to guard us, so that none of us could go outside without being accompanied by many guards.

These men later returned to propose that we give them our sails and rudders. The Captain declared that he would give up none of these things. As the Samorin king had ordered that he should return to his ships without any conditions; they could do to him whatever they wanted, but he would give up nothing to them.

The Captain and the rest of us felt very downhearted, even if outwardly we appeared not to notice what they had done to us. The Captain said that, as they had already refused him permission to go out to the ships, they should [at least] permit his men to do so as they would die from hunger there. They said that we would remain. That if we died from hunger then we must resign ourselves to it; as they cared nothing about that! While thus detained, one of the men whom we had missed the night before appeared, and told the Captain that Nicolau Coelho had been with the ship's boats on shore since the previous night, waiting for him.<sup>48</sup> The Captain, when he learned this, at once sent a man off, as secretly as he could manage and with much cunning, because we had many guards all around us, [with orders] that he should tell Nicolau Coelho that he should return to the ships as quickly as possible and put them in a secure place. When this message reached Nicolau Coelho, he departed forthwith. But as he was leaving, our guards were informed of what was going on. At once they launched many *almadias* and chased after him for a short distance. When they saw that they could not overtake him, they returned to where the Captain was, and they asked him to write a letter to his brother, telling him to bring the ships closer to shore, and that he come further inside the port. The Captain said he was quite willing to do this, but that he [Paulo da Gama] would not do this, that even if he was willing and consented, those who were with him, not willing to die, would not consent to do so. They replied to him how could this be so, since they well knew, that any order he gave, would be carried out.

The Captain did not wish to order the ships to come inside the port because it seemed to him, and to us as well, that as soon as they came inside, that they would be captured, and they would kill us, him first, then us who were already detained under their power.

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<sup>48</sup> According to Castanheda LI C.XXI (54) one of these men was Gonalo Pires.

All this day passed with us in the midst of this anguish, as you have seen.<sup>49</sup> When night came, many more people surrounded us. They did not allow us to walk in the compound where we were kept, but instead put us in a tiled court. There, they surrounded us with many men, placing us in the middle of them. On the following day, we expected that we would be separated from each other, or that they would do us some other harm, as we could see that they were furious with us. All the same, we did not fail to make a good supper from things found in the village. That night more than one hundred men guarded us, all of them armed with swords, two edged battle axes,<sup>50</sup> shields, and bows and arrows. They also set a watch. While some slept, others kept guard, and thus they took turns throughout the night.

And when the following day dawned, which was a Saturday, the 2nd day of June, these gentlemen returned in the morning. They appeared with a better countenance, saying that as the Captain had informed the king that he would land his merchandise, that he should order this done. Especially since the custom of this country was that any ship which arrived landed its merchandise at once, and even its crew, and that until all the merchandise had been sold, the merchants would not return to their ships. The Captain replied yes, that he would write to his brother to see it done. They said that this was well and good, and that as soon as the merchandise was landed, they would at once allow him to go to his ships. The Captain immediately wrote back to his brother to send certain things; which he dispatched at once. As soon as they saw this, they allowed him [Vasco da Gama] to go at once to the ships. Two men remained on shore with the things which had been landed. At this, we all rejoiced greatly and gave many thanks to Our Lord God for extricating us from such men, completely without reason, as if they were beasts. Because we well knew that once the Captain was onboard the ships, even though others remained, nothing would happen to them.

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<sup>49</sup> In the manuscript *como tendes visto*. This direct form of address to potential readers directing them to the events in the previous paragraphs suggests that the author envisioned a significant audience for his work.

<sup>50</sup> *Bisarma* in the manuscript, from the Latin *gisarma*. These weapons probably resembled a halberd with a spear point, and a small axe at the foot of the point or a spike on the opposite side. For the etymology of this word, cf. Herculano, *Roteiro*, p. 73, and Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 67, who both refer to Sir Henry Spelman's *Glossarium archailogicum* (London, 1664) and Charles du Fresne, Seigneur du Cange, *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis* (1678) (7 vols., Paris, 1840–1850).

As soon as he was on the ships, he ordered that he did not wish any more merchandise landed.

*[Portuguese Merchandise at Pandarane]*

Five days later [7 June] the Captain sent word to the king that although he had ordered him straight back to his ships, certain of his people had not permitted him to go. Instead they had detained him on the road for a day and a night. He had already landed his merchandise as he had been ordered, but the Moors had only come there to belittle it. He also said that he looked forward to what he [the king] would order in this matter. Although he placed no value on the merchandise; he and his ships were nevertheless at his service. The king at once sent word that those who acted thus were bad Christians, and that he would punish them. He soon sent seven or eight merchants to inspect the merchandise, and to buy it if they desired. He also sent a man of quality with the factor, who was already there, and said, that if any Moor went there, they might kill him without the fear of punishment.

These merchants, whom the king sent, remained in this place for about eight days. But instead of buying, they belittled the merchandise. The Moors no longer came to the house where the merchandise was; but they still wished us ill, in such a way, that whenever we went ashore, they acted as if we (sickened them), spitting on the ground, and saying "Portugal! Portugal!" Moreover, from the very beginning, they sought a way to capture us and kill us all.

When the Captain found that the merchandise was not at a place where it would sell, he promptly made this known to the king, and [his] desire to send it to Calicut; asking that he permit this. As soon as the king heard this message from the Captain, he at once ordered the *bale* to assemble many men who could carry all this on their backs to Calicut. He instructed that this transfer would be paid at his expense, saying that nothing belonging to the king of Portugal would incur expenses in his country. And all this was done with the motive of doing us harm, due to the bad report that he had already received on us: that we were thieves who went about to steal. At the same, he did all this in the manner I have shown.

*[Portuguese Merchandise at Calicut]*

On Sunday, the day of St. John the Baptist, which was the 24th of June, the merchandise left for Calicut. Once the merchandise was there, the Captain ordered that all his men should go visit Calicut, in this manner: that each ship should send a man ashore, and, when he returned, another would go. In this way all of us would be able to go and see the city, and each one would be able to buy what they wanted. Our men, when they went along the road, were received by all the Christians with much hospitality, greatly rejoicing when one of them entered their house, to eat or sleep; and they gave them freely of all they had, with much good will. At the same time, many men came to the ships to sell fish in exchange for bread, and they received a warm welcome from us. Many others came with their sons, and little children, and the Captain ordered that they should be fed. All this was done so that we could make peace and amity with them, and so that they would speak well of us not evil. There were so many of these visitors that they began to annoy us. Many times it was fully dark, and we were still not able to put them off the ships. This was due to the multitude of people who live in this country and the scarcity of food for them. One time it even happened that some of our men were mending some sails and took biscuits with them to eat. So many people surrounded them, both small children and grown men, that they took the biscuits out of their hands, and in the end, they had none to eat.

All of us on board ship went ashore, as I have told you, in twos and threes. Each one taking things we had, bracelets, clothes, tin, shirts; each one in this way taking what they had and selling it. Even though they did not sell them as lucratively as we had hoped, based on the value of these things, upon our arrival in Mozambique. A very fine shirt, that in Portugal fetches 300 *reis*, is worth here only two *fanões*,<sup>51</sup> which is worth only thirty *reais*; yet the value of thirty *reais* here is great. As we sold shirts cheaply, so we sold other things, in order to take some things away from this country if only as samples. They purchased goods

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<sup>51</sup> In the manuscript *fanos*. In 1498 the *fanão* in Calicut was worth 15 *reis*. According to Antonio Nunes, *O Livro dos pesos, medidas, e moedas* (Lisbon 1554) by the mid-16th century its value had risen to nearly 26 *reis*.



which are sold in this city, including cloves, cinnamon, and precious stones. After each had purchased what they wanted, they came back to the ships, without anyone saying anything to them. When the Captain saw that the people here were so well disposed, he decided to leave a factor with merchandise ashore, along with a clerk and certain other men.<sup>52</sup>

[*Diogo Dias Sent as Envoy to the Samorin*]

When the time for our departure arrived, the Captain major sent as a gift some amber<sup>53</sup> to the king, along with coral, and many other things. He ordered that the king be told that he wished to depart for Portugal, [and ask] if he desired to send any envoys to the king of Portugal. He said that would leave behind a factor and a clerk with merchandise, at his service. And that he would ask him [the Samorin] to send the king, his Lord, a *bahar* of cinnamon,<sup>54</sup> and another or cloves, and samples of other spices that he saw fit; and that the factor would make money and could pay for them, if he desired it.

After this message from the Captain reached the king, he waited four days before he would speak with the messenger. And when the messenger who carried it entered the place where the king was, he eyed him with a harsh look and asked him what he wanted. The messenger gave him the Captain's message in the manner written above, and then referred to the present which had been sent. The king said that what he brought should be given to his factor, and that he did not wish to see it. He also stated that the Captain should be informed that since he wished to depart, he should pay him six hundred *xerafins* and that then he might go, that this was the custom of the country and of those who came to it.<sup>55</sup> Diogo Dias, who carried this message, thereupon answered that he would return with this reply to the Captain. And as he left, certain men departed with him. When they arrived at the house

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<sup>52</sup> According to Barros DI C.X (166) in addition to Dias and Braga, Fernão Martins and four others were sent ashore.

<sup>53</sup> *Alambares* in the manuscript.

<sup>54</sup> *Bagar* in the manuscript. The *bahar* at Calicut was made up of 20 *faraçolas* and equal in 1554 to 208.16 kgs. or 459 lbs.

<sup>55</sup> The *xerafim* (*xarafigins* in mss.) was equal to 300 *reis* at that time, so that this sum equaled 180,000 *reis*.

in Calicut where the merchandise was stored, they put a number of men inside with him, who watched over it, so that none of it could be sent away. In any case orders were soon given to proclaim throughout the city that no boats could approach our ships.

And as soon as they [Dias and his companions] saw they were prisoners, they promptly sent a young black, who was with them, along the coast, to see if he could find someone to take him to the ships, and relate that they were prisoners by order of the king. He went to the outskirts of the city where some fishermen lived, and one of them brought him on payment of three *fanões*. He did this because night had begun to fall and they could not be seen from the city. And as soon as he put him onboard, he departed without any delay. This took place on a Monday, which was the 13th day of the month of August 1498.

This news made us sad because we saw some of our men in the hands of our enemies: and likewise due to the great impediment this created for our departure, and even more, we grieved that a Christian king would do us such an ill turn, which this man did to his own! On the other hand we did not hold him as culpable as seemed reasonable, because we well knew that the Moors here, who were merchants from Mecca, and elsewhere, who knew us, were greatly displeased by us. They had told the king that we were thieves, and that just as soon as we began to navigate to this country, that no more ships from Mecca, nor Cambay, nor Singros,<sup>56</sup> nor from any other port, would come again to this land, from which he would derive no profit whatever. [They said] that we had nothing to give him, but rather we would only take things from him, and by this his country would be destroyed. And as well as saying this, they offered him very rich bribes to capture and kill us, so that we would not be able to return to Portugal.

The captains<sup>57</sup> learned all this from a Moor of the country, who revealed what had been ordered, warning the captains, and especially the Captain major, against leaving the ships and going to shore. Apart from what this Moor said, two Christians told us, that if the Captains went ashore

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<sup>56</sup> Fountoura da Costa *Roteiro*, p. 60, read *Ingros* for this place name. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 72, n. 1, tentatively proposed that it was a reference to Hormuz.

<sup>57</sup> *Capitães* in the manuscript. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 72, translated this word in the singular as "captain." This Muslim was Monçaide. Cf. Barros DI CXX (166–167).

their heads would be cut off, as this was what the king did to those who came to his [country], and did not give him gold.

Finding ourselves thus, on the following day [14 August] no boats came out to the ships. On the day after that [15 August] an *almadia* came out with four young men, who brought precious stones to sell. But it appeared to us that they came by order of the Moors, more than to sell stones, in order to see if we would do anything to them. But the Captain made them welcome, and wrote a letter for them to carry to his men ashore. When they saw that we would do nothing to them, many merchants came out each day, and even others who were not merchants came out of curiosity, and all were made welcome by us, and given something to eat.

On the following Sunday [19 August] about twenty-five men came out, among whom were six men of quality. The Captain judged that by these men we might recover our own men who were detained as prisoners on land. He therefore seized them, and of the lesser ones we took twelve and thus in all we captured eighteen.<sup>58</sup> He then ordered the remaining ones landed in one of his boats. He sent with them a letter to the king's factor, in which he declared that if he [the factor] would send out his men, that had been taken prisoner, he would release those he had taken. And when they learned that they had men taken as well, a crowd soon went for those at the house where the merchandise was kept, and they conducted our men to the factor's house, doing this without inflicting any harm on them.

On *Thursday*,<sup>59</sup> the 23rd of that month, we made sail, saying we were going to Portugal, and we hoped to return very soon, and that then they would know whether we were thieves. We dropped anchor about four leagues to the leeward of Calicut, and did this because of the prevailing headwind.

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<sup>58</sup> The manuscript has *dezanove* or nineteen but this was an error of the author of the copyist since da Gama had taken the six "men of distinction" plus an additional twelve.

<sup>59</sup> The manuscript reads *quarta-feira* or Wednesday but this day of the week fell on the 22nd in 1498.

On the next day [24 August] we returned toward land, and not being able to cross without difficulty the shoals that are found in front of Calicut; we again stood off and anchored within sight of the city.

On Saturday [25 August], we again stood off, and anchored so far out at sea that we could barely see the land.

On Sunday [26 August], while anchored waiting for a breeze, a boat [*de pego*], came in search of us and approached, and said that Diogo Dias was at the king's house, and that if we released those whom we held that they would bring him on board. The Captain, however, believed that they had already killed him and that they had said this merely to detain us until they had sufficiently armed themselves against us, or ships from Mecca capable of capturing us had appeared. He told them that they should depart, and not to return again without bringing out his men, or at least letters from them, or that he would order his bombards to fire on them. He added that unless they returned soon with a response, he intended to cut the heads off those he held. After all this happened, a breeze sprang up, and we cruised along the coast, and at sunset<sup>60</sup> we anchored.

How the king sent for Diogo Dias, and told him what follows:

When word reached the king that we had departed for Portugal, as he did not already have a means for accomplishing what he wished, he thought instead of undoing the evil that he had already done. He sent for Diogo Dias, to whom, when he arrived, he showed great kindness (as he had not previously done, when he brought the [da Gama's] present). He asked why the Captain had seized these men. Diogo Dias told him it was because he [the king] would not allow him and his men to return to their ships, and that he had held them as prisoners in the city. The king said that he had done well. He then asked if the factor had asked for anything<sup>61</sup> (wishing to give the impression that he knew nothing about what he had done, and that the factor alone had demanded something) saying to the factor: "Do you know that not so

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<sup>60</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 74, does not include this phrase from the manuscript in his translation.

<sup>61</sup> This was a reference to the 600 *xerafins* demanded from da Gama.

long ago, I killed another factor, because he had levied tribute on some merchandise which came to this country?" The king then said: "You, and the others here with you, go to the ships; tell your captain to send me the men he has taken, and as for the pillar that he informed me he wanted erected on the shore, the men who take you back, will bring it and put it up, and finally you will remain here with the merchandise."<sup>62</sup> At the same time, he sent a letter to the captain, intended for the king of Portugal, which had been written by the hand of Diogo Dias on a palm leaf,<sup>63</sup> as everything written in this land is done on these leaves; with an iron pen. The tenor of this letter was as follows:

*Vasco da Gama, noble of your household, came to my country; which gave me much pleasure. My country is rich in cinnamon, cloves, ginger, pepper, and precious stones. That which I desire from you in exchange is gold, silver, coral, and scarlet cloth.*

[*The Fleet off Calicut*]

On Monday morning, which was the 27th of this month, while we were anchored, seven boats approached, filled with many men, bringing Diogo Dias and the others who were with him. Not daring to put him on board, they placed him in the Captain's boat, which was still tied to the stern; but not bringing the merchandise, believing that Diogo Dias would return to shore with him. Yet, as soon as the Captain had them aboard the ship, he would not allow them to return to shore. He merely gave the pillar to those in the boat, as the king had ordered that it be set up on shore. The Captain major also turned over six men to them, the most distinguished that he held, keeping six others, stating that the following day if they brought out the merchandise, he would immediately turn over those who remained.

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<sup>62</sup> The *padrão* was dedicated to São Gabriel since it had been carried aboard the flagship.

<sup>63</sup> This traditional method of writing in south India was done on the dried, smoothed, and smoke treated leaves of the talipot (*pana ola* in Malayalam) palm tree.

On Tuesday morning [28 August], while at anchor, a Moor from Tunis<sup>64</sup> took refuge on one of our ships. He spoke our language telling us that they had taken everything he possessed, and that he feared worse things would happen, as that was his luck! The people of this country said that he was a Christian and that he had come to Calicut by order of the king of Portugal. He desired to come with us, rather than remain in a country where any day they might kill him. At ten o'clock that day, seven boats with many people approached. Three of them carried the bolts of striped cloth on their benches, which we had left on shore, giving us to understand that they were thus bringing out all our merchandise. These three closed on our ships, while the other four stood off a good distance from us. They told us that if we put the men in one of our boats, they would then place the merchandise in it, in exchange for their men. After we saw through this ruse,<sup>65</sup> the captain Major told them to go away, declaring that he cared nothing for the merchandise, but would rather bring these men to Portugal.<sup>66</sup> He also warned them to be careful as he expected to return soon to Calicut, and that then they would know whether they were thieves, as the Moors had told them...

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<sup>64</sup> According to Castanheda LI C.XXIII (61) this man was Bontaibo or Monçaide. Góis PI C.XLIII (94) and Barros DI C.X (168) confirm this fact, with Barros calling him "the loyal Monçaide."

<sup>65</sup> In the manuscript *raposia* = cunning, slyness, or "fox-like trick."

<sup>66</sup> Five of these men were in fact taken to Lisbon. They returned aboard the fleet of Pedro de Alvares Cabral which reached Calicut in September 1500. Cf. *Alguns documentos*, p. 97.



## THE RETURN VOYAGE

### *[Calicut to Angediva]*

On Wednesday, which was the 29th of August, seeing that we had already found and discovered what we had come in search of, both in terms of spices and precious stones, and as it seemed unlikely that we could establish peace and cordial relations with the people here, the Captain major and the other captains agreed, that we should depart. [They decided] to take with us the men that we held, as they, upon returning to Calicut, might help us establish friendly relations.

We therefore set sail and departed for Portugal, greatly rejoicing at our good fortune in discovering the great things that we had found!

On Thursday [30 August] at noon while becalmed about a league below [north] of Calicut, about seventy boats approached us,<sup>1</sup> crowded with men; wearing cuirasses of red folded cloth, much like a strong leather breastplate. Their weapons for the body, arms, and head were these...(the author has omitted to tell us how these weapons were made).<sup>2</sup>

As soon as they came within range of our ship's bombards, the Captain major ordered his ship and the others to fire upon them. But they followed us for about an hour and a half. As they were doing this, a thunderstorm broke which carried us out to sea; and when they saw that they could no longer do us harm, they returned to shore, while we continued with our route.

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<sup>1</sup> Castanheda LI C. XXV (62) used the term *tones* when describing these boats, implying that they were rowed and made of planks sewn together with coir rope. Cf. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 77 n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> This interpolation by the copyist confirms that the manuscript is not the original.



*[The Commerce of Calicut]*

From this land of Calicut, which is also called Upper India, comes the spices that are consumed in the east and west, in Portugal, and in all the countries of the world. Precious stones of every type also come from this city called Calicut. That is: in this city there are, of local production, the following spices: much ginger; pepper, cinnamon, even though this is not as fine as that coming from an island, called Çilam [Ceylon], which is eight days journey from Calicut. All this cinnamon passed through the city of Calicut. There is an island, called Melaca [Melaka], which sends cloves to this city. The ships from Meca [Mecca] load spices here and carry them to a city in Mecca,<sup>3</sup> called Judea [Jidda]. And from this island [Melaka] to there [Jidda] takes fifty days of sailing before the wind, since the ships of this country cannot tack; and there they unload their cargoes, and they pay the Grand Sultan<sup>4</sup> his customs duties. And from there the merchandise is transshipped in smaller vessels, which carry it up the Red Sea to a place close to Santa Catarina of Mount Sinai, called Tuur,<sup>5</sup> and here again customs duties are paid. From that place the merchants load the spices on camels, hired for four *cruzados* each, and they carry it to Quayro [Cairo] in ten days' time, and here they pay more customs duties. On this road to Cairo, many times they are robbed by thieves who live in that country, like the Bedouins and others.

Here [Cairo] the spices are loaded on ships plying a river, called the Nile, which rises from the land of Prester John, in Lower India; and descending this river for two days they reach a place called Roxete [Rosetta], where they pay more duties. There the spices are loaded on camels, and brought in a day to a city called Alexandria, which is a seaport. The galleys of Venice and Genoa come to this city of Alexandria in search of these spices, which yield the Grand Sultan a revenue

<sup>3</sup> As Ravenstein *Journal*, p. 78 n. 1, noted, this should be "Arabia."

<sup>4</sup> This was Az-Zahir Qanshaw (1498–1500) of the Circassian Burji Mamluk dynasty which ruled Egypt from 1250 to 1517.

<sup>5</sup> In the first edition of the *Roteiro*, Kopke had identified this place with Suez. Ravenstein citing M.F. Denis argued for Tor (El Tor or Tur Sinai). Given the fact that the port of El Tor then dominated the shipping of the Gulf of Suez and given its proximity to the Monastery of St. Catherine, this seems like a logical revision.

of six hundred thousand *cruzados*,<sup>6</sup> out of which he gives each year a king called Çidadim,<sup>7</sup> one hundred thousand, to make war on Prester John. The title of Grand Sultan is bought for money, and does not pass from father to son.

I return now to describing our voyage home:

Going along this coast, with feeble winds, we tacked often with shifting land and sea breezes; and when becalmed during the day we dropped anchor and lay to.

On a Monday, which was the 10th of September, as we sailed along the coast the Captain major landed one of the men whom we had taken, who had lost an eye, with letters to the Samorin king written in Moorish [Arabic] by the hand of one of the Moors who came with us.<sup>8</sup> The country where we landed this Moor with these letters, is called Compia, and its king Biaquoule.<sup>9</sup> This king is at war with the king of Calicut.

On the following day [11 September], while becalmed, boats approached carrying fish to sell, and the men came onboard our ships without exhibiting any fear.

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<sup>6</sup> A gold coin, the *cruzado* was worth 380 *reis* until 1498. Therefore the 600,000 *cruzados* would equal 228,000,000 *reis*.

<sup>7</sup> The Çidadim or Cadadin was the ruler of the Muslim Adal sultanate of Harar in Ethiopia. Sultan Muhammed II ibn Azhar ud-din ibn 'Ali ruled there from 1487 to 1520. He and his successors including most notably Ahmad ibn Ibrihim al-Ghazi (r. 1525–1544) were in fact beginning an expansionist campaign against the Christian emperors of Ethiopia or "Prester John." Cf. *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque, Second Viceroy of India*, translated and edited by Walter de Gray Birch (4 vols., London, 1875–1884), I: 201–02.

<sup>8</sup> Castandeha LI C. XXV (63) stated that Monçaide wrote this letter. In it, da Gama stated that he had only taken the Malabaris with him so that they could attest to his discoveries. He also said that he would have left a factor in Calicut but feared that he would have been killed by the Muslims there. Finally, the Captain major stated that he hoped that friendly relations would ultimately be arranged between them to their mutual advantage. According to Góis C.XLIII (95) in this letter, da Gama also complained about the ill-treatment he had received at the hands of the *bale* and the Muslims in the town. In his version of events, the Zamorin was pleased with the contents of the letter and even shared its contents with his wives and the relatives and friends of the kidnapped Malabaris. Cf. also Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 79 n. 1.

<sup>9</sup> This place has usually been identified with Cannanur (Kannur) in the rival Kolathunad state of the Kolattiri Rajas located north of Calicut. Cf. Sir Richard Burton *Camoens* II: 442.

On Saturday, the 15th of the said month, we found ourselves near some islets, which were about two leagues from land.

[*The Santa Maria Islands*]<sup>10</sup>

There were launched a boat and put up a pillar on one of the islets, to which we gave the name: the pillar of Santa Maria. This was because the king had ordered the Captain to erect three pillars, one with the name S. Rafael, another S. Gabriel and the other Santa Maria. We had thus, with this, succeeded in this task of putting up all three; namely the first we set up along the *Rios dos Bons Sinais*, named S. Rafael; the second in Calicut, named S. Gabriel; and this final one named Santa Maria.<sup>11</sup>

Here again many boats loaded with fish came out to the ships; and the captain gave the fishermen shirts and a very warm welcome. And he asked them if they would take pleasure with a pillar that he wished to erect on the island. They replied that they would be very happy, and that if we erected it, that it would thereby confirm that we were Christians like themselves. And this pillar was indeed erected with much amity.

During this same night, with an offshore wind we set sail, and followed our route.

On Thursday, which was the 20th<sup>12</sup> of the said month, we reached a hilly country, very beautiful and with a pleasant climate, close to which there were six small islands. We anchored here close to land.

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<sup>10</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 80 n. 1, mistakenly identified these islands as the Netrani or Pigeon Islands found at 14°01' N 74°20' E. In fact, the St. Mary Islands are found off Malpe and Karnataka coast at 13°22' N 74°40' E.

<sup>11</sup> Barros DI C. XI (169) lists 5 *padrões* "erected" on the voyage: *São Rafael* at the River of Bons Sinais; *São Jorge* in Mozambique; *Santo Espírito* in Malindi; *Santa Maria* on the islands of the same name; and *São Gabriel* at Calicut. Machado and Campos, p. 209 n. 5, argued that the list in the *Roteiro* ignored the pillar erected at Mossel Bay on 7 December 1497 but immediately torn down. This *padrão*, however, was probably not one carried out from Lisbon but jury rigged on the site.

<sup>12</sup> The manuscript has the 19th, but Thursday was the 20th of that month.

[Anjediva]<sup>13</sup>

We launched a boat, as we had to take on water and wood sufficient to last us during our voyage across [the Gulf] which we hoped to accomplish, if the winds favored us, as we much desired. Upon landing, we encountered a young man who showed us along the bank of a river, a spring with excellent water, which flowed from between two boulders.<sup>14</sup> The Captain major gave this man a cap, and asked him if he was a Moor or a Christian. He replied that he was a Christian; and when we told him that we too were Christians, he was much pleased.

On the following morning [21 September],<sup>15</sup> an *almadia* came out with four men, who brought gourds and cucumbers. The Captain major then asked them if cinnamon, ginger, or any other spices were to be found in this country. They replied that there was a good deal of cinnamon, but no other types of spices. The Captain at once sent two men ashore with them to bring him a sample of it. These men took them to a forest, where there was a limitless number of cinnamon trees, and from these trees they cut two large branches with their leaves. When we went in our boats to take on water, we met these two men with the cinnamon branches they were carrying, and with them there were already about twenty others, who brought the Captain many chickens, cow's milk, and gourds. They told the Captain that he should send these two men with them, because they had, a short distance from there, much dried cinnamon, which they would show them and bring back samples as well.<sup>16</sup> After we had taken on water, we returned to the ships, while they remained, promising to come out to the ships the following day with a present for the Captain of cows, pigs, and chickens.

Early the next morning [22 September], we sighted two ships close to land, about two leagues off. But we paid them no heed. We went to cut wood ashore, as the tide was not right for entering the river to take on

<sup>13</sup> This small island group is found at 14°45' N 74°06' E, or ca. forty miles south of Goa. There are five islands not six: Kurnagal, Mudlingud, Devgad, Devragad, and the largest, Anjediva or "fifth island" in Malayalam.

<sup>14</sup> *Penedos* in the manuscript, which Ravenstein translated as "hills."

<sup>15</sup> *Pela manhã* in the manuscript. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 81, however, merely states "on the following day."

<sup>16</sup> These branches and leaves were in fact brought back to Portugal. Cf. Appendix B.

water. While we were thus engaged, it occurred to the Captain that these ships were larger than he had earlier believed. He therefore ordered us into the boats, as soon as we had eaten and sent us to discover if these boats belonged to Moors or Christians. And when the Captain returned aboard ship, he ordered a seaman to go aloft to the mainsail top, to look out for other ships. This seaman sighted, about six leagues out to sea from us, eight ships which were becalmed. When he heard this, the Captain immediately gave orders to sink these ships. But as they found a favorable breeze, they came about to the lee as much as they could; and when they were abreast of us, but still two leagues distant, and we thought they might be able to sight us, we went out to meet them. When they saw us approaching them, they began to come about with their sterns making for land; and one of them, before it reached shore, broke its helm, and the men aboard placed themselves in the boat that they towed astern, and reached shore. We, who were closest to that vessel, at once boarded her. We found nothing aboard her save for some provisions and arms. The provisions consisted of coconuts and four jars of palm sugar, and all the rest was sand, which they carried as ballast. The other seven vessels grounded, and we bombarded them from our ships.

On the following morning [23 September], while at anchor, we saw seven men approaching us in a boat. They said that these vessels had come from Calicut, in search of us, and that if they had taken us, they would have killed us all.<sup>17</sup>

The next day [24 September], having left this place, we anchored about two bombard shots from the place where we had first been, close to an island where they told us we could find water. The Captain at once sent Nicolao Coelho out in an armed boat, to find the watering hole. On this island, he found the ruins of a large stone church. This church had been destroyed by the Moors, according to what the local people told us, except for a chapel which had been roofed with straw, where they prayed before three black stones,<sup>18</sup> which stood in the middle of the body of the church. In addition to this church, we found [a tank]

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<sup>17</sup> Goís PI C.XLIII (95) stated that these ships were under the command of the Hindu corsair Timoja (Timmayya) based at the nearby port of Onor (Honowar).

<sup>18</sup> This was on the island of Anjediva. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 83 n. 2, suggests that these stones were three (Shiva?) lingams from the ruins of this Hindu temple.

of stone, made in the same fashion, from which we took as much water as we wanted. At the highest point of the island, there was a large tank four fathoms deep. In front of this church we also found a beach, where we careened the *Berrio* and the ship of the Captain major; the *Rafael* was not beached, on account of difficulties described below.

One day being aboard the *Berrio* which was then beached, two large boats or *fustas*<sup>19</sup> approached us loaded with many people. They rowed toward us to the sound of drums and flutes and with flags on the tops of their masts. Five others remained along the coast for their protection. Before they reached our ships, we asked the people whom we carried with us, who these men were. They told us that we should not allow them to board us, as they were thieves who had come to capture us, if they were able; that the men of this country carried arms and boarded ships as friends but that as soon as they were aboard, if they felt powerful enough, they would seize the ship and those aboard. Accordingly, as soon as they came within range of our bombards, they were fired upon by the guns of the *Rafael* and the ship of the Captain major. They then began to shout: "Tambaram!" saying they were Christians, because Christians of this land of India call God—Tambaram. And when they saw that we took no notice of this reasoning, they began to flee toward land. Nicolau Coelho followed them for a short distance in a boat, until he was recalled, by a signal flag displayed from the Captain major's ship.<sup>20</sup>

The following day [25 September?], while the captains<sup>21</sup> were ashore with many men cleaning the *Berrio*, two small boats approached. They carried about a dozen well dressed men, and brought the Captain major as a present, a bundle of sugar cane. These men, after they landed, began to ask the Captain for permission to see the ships. The Captain, believing that they had come as spies, began to grow angry with them. Just then, two other boats with just as many people appeared. But those already

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According to Burton *Camoens* II: 444 the temple had been destroyed by the Muslims in ca. 1312.

<sup>19</sup> These foists were light, open boats with a single mast. According to Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 84 n. 1, in "Tambaram" in Malayalam signifies "lord" or "master."

<sup>20</sup> It is at this point of the narrative that Barros DI C. XI (170–171) and Castanheda LI C. XXVI (65) identify these ships as those under the command of Timoja.

<sup>21</sup> In the manuscript *capitães*. Ravenstein, *Journal*, however, p. 84, used the singular "captain."

there, knowing that the captain was not well disposed toward them, told those who were approaching not to disembark, and to turn back. They too re-embarked at once, and followed behind the others.

While the Captain major's ship was being careened, a man of about forty years of age arrived, who spoke very fluent Venetian, dressed all in linen, with a very fine *touca* on his head, and a sword in his belt.<sup>22</sup> As soon as he landed, he quickly embraced the Captain major and the captains. He began to tell us that he was a Christian from the west, and that he had come to this country at a young age, and now served a Moorish Lord<sup>23</sup> who possessed forty thousand horsemen; and that he too had become Moorish. Yet, in his heart he had remained a Christian. One day while at his Lord's house, news arrived that some men had reached Calicut whom no one could understand, and who went about fully clothed; and that when he heard this, he said that these men must be Franks, for this is what they call us in these parts. So he begged permission to come and visit us, saying that if he [his Lord] would not permit it he would die of sorrow! His Lord had thereupon told him that he could go and to tell us that if we required anything in his country that he would provide it, including ships and provisions, and that moreover if we desired to remain in his country, it would give him great pleasure. The Captain gave him many thanks for this offer, which seemed to him to have been made in good faith. The man then said that he would ask a favor from the Captain, namely that he be given a cheese to bring to one of his companions who had remained on the mainland. Because he had told him, that if things went well, he would bring him a token which would relax him. The Captain accordingly ordered a cheese and two soft loaves to be given to him; and he

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<sup>22</sup> This bright and articulate man was evidently a Jewish merchant from Europe or the Levant who had traveled to India and according to Burton *Camoens* II: 445 married a Jewess in Cochin before serving the Muslim sultan of Bijapur. He would accompany the fleet back to Portugal, and was known as Gaspar da Gama after his subsequent baptism in honor of his "godfather" Vasco da Gama. In Lisbon, he was also called Gaspar da India and offered his advice on Indian affairs to D. Manuel. Eventually he was knighted for these services. For details cf. Barros DI C. XI (171–173) and Góis PI C. XLIII (95–96) who state that he was a Polish Jew who had come to India via Sarajevo, Jerusalem, and Alexandria; Castanheda LI C. XXV (66–67) noted that he had married in Cochin and taken the name Gaspar to honor one of the three Magi. Cf. also Elias Lipiner, *Gaspar da Gama: Un converse na frota de Cabral* (Rio de Janeiro, 1986).

<sup>23</sup> Yusuf Adil Shah (r. 1489–1511), the sultan of Bijapur whose domains included the coastal city of Goa.

remained on the island, talking so much and of so many things, that from time to time he contradicted himself.

Meanwhile, Paulo da Gama had gone over to the local Christians who had brought him, and asked them who this man was. They said that he was a privateer,<sup>24</sup> who had come there to attack us, and that along the coast he had his ships loaded with many people. Knowing this much, and divining the rest, we seized him and took him to the ship drawn up on the beach. We began to flog him, in order to make him confess whether he was indeed a privateer followed by others, or why else he had come. We learned that he knew that the whole country wished us ill and that many armed men were around us, hidden among these inlets and creeks. However, none of them would dare come out and attack us now, since they were waiting for some forty ships which were begin armed to fall upon us; yet, he did not know when they would attack. As for himself he said nothing, except for what he had said at first. After he was flogged three or four times,<sup>25</sup> though he did not openly declare it; by his gestures we understood him. And he admitted that he had come to see the ships in order to discover the number of men and arms we carried.

We remained on this island for twelve days, eating much fish that the people of the mainland brought out to sell, and also many pumpkins and cucumbers. They also brought out boats loaded with green cinnamon wood, with the leaves still attached.

*[Angediva to Malindi]*

After our ships were cleaned and we had taken on as much water as we needed, and the ship we had captured was broken up, we departed on a Friday, which was the 5th day of October.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Armador* in the manuscript. Ravenstein used "pirate" but since he was operating on behalf of the sultan of Bijapur, privateer is more appropriate.

<sup>25</sup> In the manuscript the verb *perguntar* = to question was used, but this was a euphemism. Barros DÍ C. XI (172) confirms that he was tortured.

<sup>26</sup> From the 24th September through the 5th October 1498 inclusive.



Before this [prize] ship was broken up, they offered the Captain major 1000 *fanões* for it. But he said that it was not for sale, and because it belonged to his enemies, he preferred to burn it.

When we were about two hundred leagues out to sea from where we had departed, the Moor, whom we had taken with us declared, that enough time had already passed to stop hiding things from us. It was true that while at the house of his Lord, word had come that we were wandering lost along the coast, and that we did not know how to return home. For this reason many armed ships had been sent out to capture us. He said that his Lord had told him to come and discover what we were doing, and to see if he could bring us to his country. For if a pirate had taken us, he would not have received a share of the booty; but if we had landed in his country he would have taken us. And because we were valiant men he would have used us to make war against the neighboring kings. But he who reckons without the host pays twice.<sup>27</sup>

We spent so much time on this crossing [the Gulf] that three months less three days were devoted to it;<sup>28</sup> with many calms and contrary winds, which we encountered along the way. So that all our men fell ill with their gums, which grew over their teeth, in such a fashion that they could not eat. Their legs also swelled, and other parts of their bodies as well. This affliction spread until the men died without having any other disease. Thirty of our men died in this manner during this crossing, not counting a similar number who had already died! And those who could navigate each ship were thereby reduced to merely seven or eight men; and even these men were not as well as they needed to be! So that I assure you that if this crossing had lasted another fifteen days; there would have been no men at all to sail the ships! At that point, we had reached our limit. Thus proceeding in the midst of this affliction, we made many vows to the Saints, and petitions to them on behalf of the ships. The captains had already agreed that if a favorable

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<sup>27</sup> In the manuscript *esta conta era feita sem hóspeda*. Ravenstein translated this phrase literally: "This reckoning, however, was made without the host." But this expression was a contemporary proverb or adage with several meanings related to the idea of determining an action that in fact is dependent on the consent or will of another. Cf. Herculano, *Roteiro*, p. 100 n. 1. Machado and Campos, pp. 266–67 n. 129, suggest the idea of not "counting chickens before they hatch."

<sup>28</sup> From the 5th October 1498 through the 2nd January 1499.

wind allowed us to return to India, from whence we had come, we would head there!

But it pleased God, in his mercy, to provide us with a wind which in about six days brought us to land. At this we rejoiced as much as we had reached Portugal, because we hoped, with the help of God, to recover our health there, as we had done once before.

This took place on a Wednesday, the 2nd of January<sup>29</sup> of the year 1499. As it was already night as we approached land, we came about and lay to.

And when morning came [3 January], we went to reconnoiter the coast, in order to discover where Our Lord had taken us. For there was not a pilot among us, nor any other man who could fix our position, in order to know in what place we then were, even though some said that we had to be among some islands that are off Mozambique, about three hundred leagues from the mainland.<sup>30</sup> They said this because a Moor (one of those we had taken at Mozambique) stated that these islands were very unhealthy, and that even those people who inhabited them suffered from the same disease which had afflicted us.

[*Mogadishu*]<sup>31</sup>

We found ourselves off a very large city, with houses of several stories, and large palaces in its center, and four towers around it. This town faced the sea; and belonged to the Moors, and was called Mogadoxo. And as we passed before it, nearly upon it, we fired off many bombards.

We continued on our way along the coast, with a very fair wind behind us, sailing during the day and laying to at night, since we did not know how far we were from Malindi, where we much desired to go.

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<sup>29</sup> The manuscript reads February but this was a mistake. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 87, did not include the day of the week.

<sup>30</sup> The author here meant a local pilot since Pêro Escobar, Afonso Gonçalves and the Malindi pilot were also still alive and aboard the fleet. As Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 88 n. 1, pointed out the estimate of 300 leagues was highly inaccurate since from Mozambique to Madagascar and the Comoros was only ca. 60 leagues.

<sup>31</sup> Found at 02°02' N 45°22' E.

On Saturday, which was the 5th of that month, while becalmed, a thunderstorm suddenly burst upon us, breaking the ties of the *Rafael*. While we were repairing this ship, a privateer came out toward us, from a town called Pate,<sup>32</sup> with eight boats with many men. As soon as they came within range of our bombards, we fired at them and they soon fled toward land; we did not pursue them since we did not have a favorable wind.

[Malindi]

On Monday, which was the 7th of that month [January],<sup>33</sup> we cast anchor off Malindi. The king at once sent out a long boat, carrying many men, with a gift of some sheep. He ordered the Captain informed that he was welcome, and that for several days he had been expecting him, and he also sent many other words of amity and peace. The Captain in turn sent a man back to shore with these messengers who had come out, to return the following day with oranges, that were much desired by the sick that we carried. In fact he brought these promptly, along with many other fruits, although the sick did not profit by these—since the climate affected them in such a way that many of them died here. Many Moors also came on board by order of the king, and they brought many chickens and eggs to barter.

The Captain, seeing that the king was showing us such courtesy at a time when we were so in need of it, sent him a present. He also ordered him told by one of our men, who knew how to speak Arabic, that he might provide a tusk of ivory to bring to the king [of Portugal] his Lord, and that he permit a pillar erected ashore, to remain as a sign of friendship. The king replied that he was very happy to do everything he had been asked, out of love for the king of Portugal, whom he desired to serve and *to be always in his service*.<sup>34</sup> In fact, he promptly ordered a tusk taken to the Captain, and he ordered the pillar erected.

He also sent out a young Moor, who wanted to see Portugal, who was invited to go with us. This Moor was strongly recommended to the

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<sup>32</sup> Pate Island off the coast of Kenya at 02°06 S 41°03 E.

<sup>33</sup> The manuscript reads the 9th but this fell on a Wednesday that year.

<sup>34</sup> Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 89, did not include this phrase.

Captain by the king. Moreover, he said that he had sent the young man so that the king of Portugal might know how much he desired his friendship.<sup>35</sup>

We remained for five days at this place,<sup>36</sup> enjoying ourselves and recovering from the hardships we had endured on our crossing—where all of us had confronted death!

*[The East Africa Coast: Malindi to the Cape of Good Hope]*

On a Friday morning we departed. On Saturday, which was the 12th of that month, we passed close to Mombasa.

On Sunday, we anchored at the shoals of São Rafael, where we burned the ship of that name, as it was impossible to sail three ships with so few men as remained. During our stay, we transferred all the riggings of this ship to the others.

We remained here for fifteen days, and from a town in front of us called Tamugata,<sup>37</sup> many fowl were brought out to us to sell and barter in exchange for shirts and bracelets.

On Sunday, which was the 27th of this month, we departed from this place with a fair wind behind us, and the following night we lay to.

And when morning came [28 January], we found ourselves close to a very large island called Jangiber,<sup>38</sup> peopled by many Moors; which lies a good ten leagues from the mainland.

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<sup>35</sup> This young Muslim “mouro e jaguora cristaão” is probably the one referred to by D. Manuel in his letter of 29 August 1499 to the Cardinal Protector in Rome. Cf. ANTT *Colecção de S. Vicente*, L. 14 fo. 1, given in Fontoura da Costa, *Roteiro*, pp. 197–99.

<sup>36</sup> The 7th through the 11th January inclusive.

<sup>37</sup> From the 13th through the 27th January inclusive. The town was Mtangata at 05°13' S 39°04' E. Góis PI C. XLIII (96) called it Tagata.

<sup>38</sup> This was Zanzibar (Unguja) found at 06°08' S 39°19' E which significantly had not been sighted on the outward passage up the African coast. The name refers to the Persian *Zangi-bar* = coast of the blacks, in Arabic *Zanji-bar*. It may also relate to ginger *Zingiber officinale*.

On the 1st day of February, in the afternoon, we dropped anchor in front of the island of S. Jorge, near Mozambique.

On the following day [2 February], in the morning, we set up a pillar on that island, where we had said mass going out. But it rained so heavily that we could not light a fire to melt the lead to affix the cross, and it therefore remained without one.

We then returned to the ships and departed soon thereafter.

On the 3rd of March, we reached the *Angra de São Brás*, where we caught many anchovies, seals, and penguins, which we salted for our voyage.

On the 12th of the said month, we departed. When we were ten to twelve leagues from the watering place, however, the wind gusted so violently from the west that we were forced to return and anchor in this bay.

When the wind calmed, we started out once more. Our Lord gave us such a good wind, that on the 20th day of this month we doubled the Cape of Good Hope. And the men, who had managed to reach here, were in good health and robust, although at times nearly dead from the winter blasts<sup>39</sup> that we encountered in this land. But we attributed this to coming from such a hot climate more than the cold being so great.

We followed our route with a great desire of reaching home. And we sailed with the wind astern for a good twenty seven days, so that it brought us not far from the *ilha de Santiago*, which on the charts appeared no further than one hundred leagues away, while some believed that we were already quite near! But here the wind fell off and we were becalmed, and the little wind there was contrarily came from ahead. Some thunderstorms which came from the land, allowed us to determine where we were, and we sailed to windward as much as we were able.

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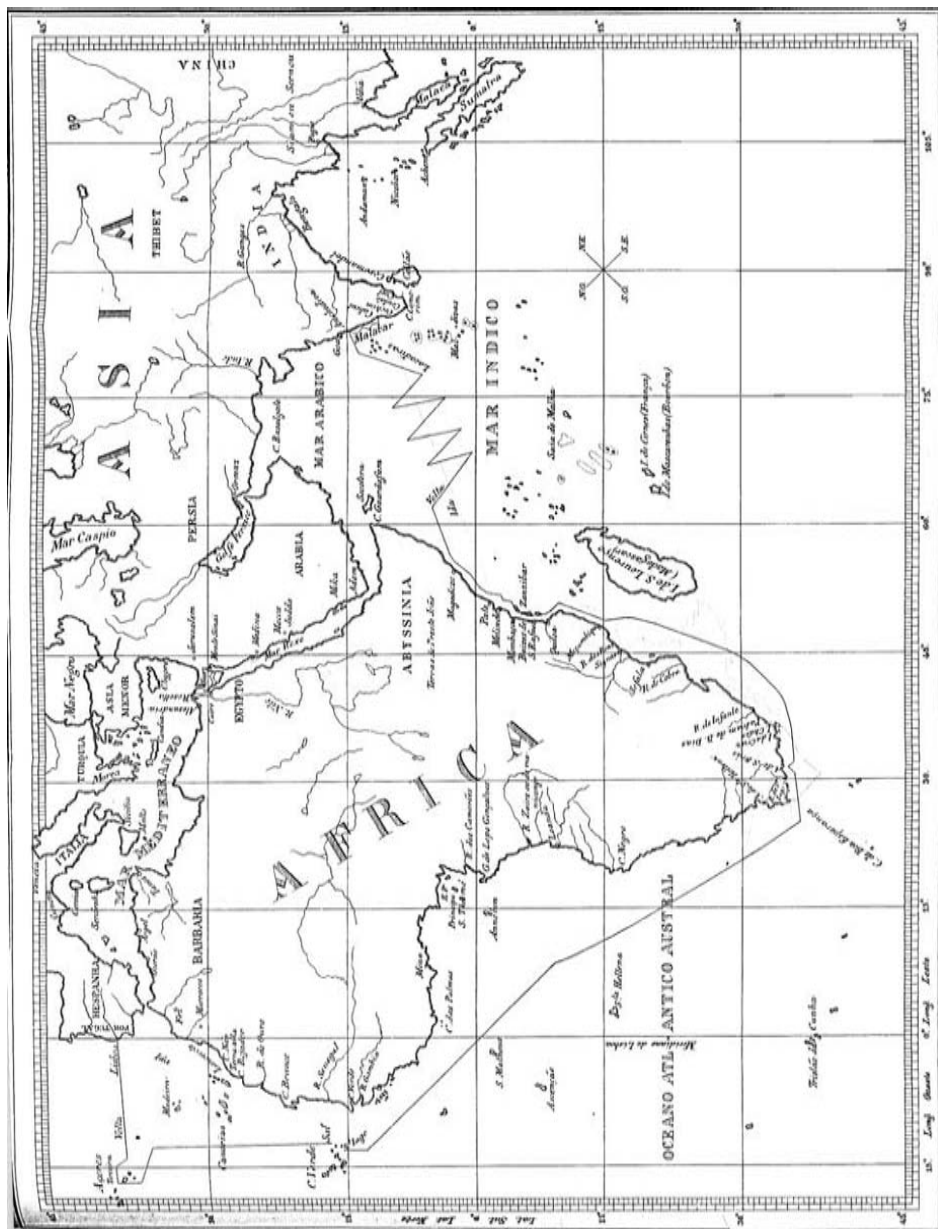
<sup>39</sup> *Bisas* in the manuscript.

On Thursday, the 25th of April, we took soundings of thirty five fathoms. All day long we followed our route, never sounding less than twenty fathoms, but we could not catch sight of land. Yet, the pilots said that we were near the shoals of the Rio Grande.<sup>40</sup>

*The Journal ends abruptly at this point. The final stages of the voyage, however, can be summarized. Shortly after the 25th April, the São Gabriel and Berrio were separated in a storm. Nicolau Coelho headed directly for Lisbon and reached the Tagus on 10 July 1499, after a voyage of 732 days. Vasco da Gama, after waiting a day for the Berrio put into the island of Santiago, where he turned over command of the São Gabriel to João de Sá with orders to make for Lisbon. Paulo da Gama was then gravely ill, most probably in the final stages of tuberculosis and his brother chartered a swift caravel to get him home as quickly as possible. But Paulo da Gama's condition only worsened and the caravel instead put into the port of Angra on the island of Terceira in the Azores. There, Paulo died 'as the good Christian that he was' and was buried with all possible honors. The exact date that João de Sá and the São Gabriel reached Lisbon is not definitively recorded, but it was probably in early August and definitely before the 28th of that month. Similarly, the exact date of the triumphal return of Vasco da Gama to Lisbon is also debated. The generally accepted date is sometime between 29 August and 14 September 1499. The epic voyage which had discovered the sea route around Africa to the riches of India and the Indian Ocean trade had at last been successfully completed.*

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<sup>40</sup> This was the Rio Geba in Guiné Bissau found at 11°58' N 15°00' W.



4. Da Gama's projected route, 1497–1499, from A.C. Teixeira de Aragao's *Vasco da Gama e a Vidigueira* (Lisbon, 1898).

## THE KINGDOMS TO THE SOUTH OF CALICUT

The names written below are of certain kingdoms which are on the coast south of Calicut and the products each possesses, and what they are worth; all of which I learned with much certainty from a man who spoke our language, and had come to these parts from Alexandria thirty years ago.<sup>1</sup>

First Calicut, where we were: all the merchandise written below comes here; and therefore the ships from Mecca bring their cargoes to this city of Calicut.

This king, who is called Samorin, can muster 100,000 fighting men, including auxiliaries, since his jurisdiction possesses very few people.

These are the articles of merchandise that the ships of Mecca carry here, and their value throughout India:

Copper, a *farazala* [*faraçola*]<sup>2</sup> (of nearly 30 *arrateis*) is worth 50 *fanões*, or 3 *cruzados*.

Bezoar stone<sup>3</sup> is worth its weight in silver

Knives, worth one *fanão* each

Rosewater, worth 50 *fanões* per *farazala*

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<sup>1</sup> There is little doubt that the source for this information was Gaspar da Gama who sailed back to Portugal aboard the *São Gabriel* and would have had plenty of opportunity to discuss these matters with the author of the *Journal*.

<sup>2</sup> A unit of weight, the *faraçola* was made up of from 25–30 *arrateis* (*arrátel* = 1 lb. or 453 g). Therefore the *faraçola* varied from 10–14 kg depending on the time and place. In ca. 1554, at Mozambique it was equivalent to 25 *arrateis*, 1 ounce or 11.5 kg, and at Sofala to 27 *arrateis* or 12.4 kg. According to Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 96 n. 2, at Calicut is the *faraçola* was equal to 10.4 kg. This, however, would make it equal to ca. 23 *arrateis*, while the author clearly wrote that it was equal to nearly thirty *arrateis*, which would make it equivalent to 13.7 kg.

<sup>3</sup> This calculus or stone produced mostly in ruminant animals was highly prized as an antidote to various types of poisons. In Arabic *badesar* = antidote and in Persian *pâdzahr* can be literally translated as “protection against poison.” As Raventein, *Journal* pointed out, pp. 96–97 n. 3, in Malayalam it is known as *Gôrôchanam* “out, of the cow’s brain.”



Alum,<sup>4</sup> worth 50 *fanões* per *farazala*

Chamalote [Camlot],<sup>5</sup> worth 7 *cruzados* per piece

Red Cloth, worth 2 *cruzados* per *pequi*,<sup>6</sup> of 3 spans (*palmos*)

Quicksilver, worth 10 *cruzados* per *farazala*

#### Another Kingdom

Quorongolez<sup>7</sup> is a Christian country, with a Christian king; it lies 3 days from Calicut by sea, with a fair wind. This king can muster 40,000 fighting men. There is much pepper here, a *farazala* being worth 9 *fanões* while in Calicut it is worth 14.

#### Another Kingdom

Coleu,<sup>8</sup> is Christian, and lies 10 days from Calecut by sea, with a fair wind. This king can muster 10,000 men. In this country there is much cotton cloth, but little pepper.

#### Another Kingdom

Cael,<sup>9</sup> which has a Moorish king, but Christian people. It lies 10 days by sea from Calicut. This king is able to muster 4000 fighting men and 100 war elephants. There are many pearls here.

#### Another Kingdom

Chomandarla<sup>10</sup> is Christian with a Christian king. He can muster 100,000 men. There is much lac here, with 2 *farazalas* worth a *cruzado*, it also produces much cotton cloth.

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<sup>4</sup> A mordant used for dye fixing in wools and other fabrics.

<sup>5</sup> Camel hair fabric.

<sup>6</sup> The pik was the Levantine equivalent to the Italian *braccio* (arm's length) equal to between 27 and 28 inches. The "palm" or span was the length of a man's hand from the wrist to the tip of the middle finger or about 9 inches.

<sup>7</sup> Cranganor or Kodungallur along the Kerala coast of India at the mouth of the Periyar River.

<sup>8</sup> Quilon or Kollum in southern Kerala.

<sup>9</sup> Kayalpatnam on the western coast of the gulf of Manar.

<sup>10</sup> The Coromandel coast, extending from Point Calimere (Kodikkarai) near the delta of the Kaveri River north to the mouth of the Krishna River.

### Another Kingdom

Ceilão,<sup>11</sup> which is a very large island inhabited by Christians and with a Christian king. It lies 8 days by sea from Calicut with a fair wind. This king can muster 40,000 men, and moreover has many elephants for war and to sell. All the fine cinnamon of India is found here, and also many sapphires, superior in quality to those of other lands, and few rubies, but of good quality.

### Another Kingdom

Camatarra<sup>12</sup> is Christian with a Christian king; it lies 30 days from Calicut with a fair wind. This king can muster 4000 fighting men, 1000 horsemen, and 300 war elephants. In this country there is much silk, worth 8 *cruzados* per *farazala*. There is also much lac worth 10 *cruzados* per *bahar* of 20 *farazalas*.

### Another kingdom

Xarnauz<sup>13</sup> is Christian with a Christian king. It lies 50 days from Calicut with a favorable wind. This king can muster 20,000 fighting men and 4000 horsemen, and possesses 400 war elephants. There is much benzoin in this country, worth 3 *cruzados* each *farazala*. There is also much aloe, worth 25 *cruzados* per *farazala*.

### Another kindom

Tenacar<sup>14</sup> is Christian with a Christian king. It lies 40 days from Calecut with a favorable wind. This king can muster 10,000 fighting men, and possesses 500 war elephants. In this country there is much brazil-wood,

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<sup>11</sup> Ceylon or Sri Lanka.

<sup>12</sup> The island of Sumatra in Indonesia.

<sup>13</sup> The kingdom of Siam or Thailand, its capital Ayutthaya was known as Xarnau to early European travelers including Ferdinand Mendez Pinto and Ludovico di Varthema. Cf. *The Voyages and Adventures of Ferdinand Mendez Pinto* (London, 1891), p. 284, and *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, translated and edited by J.W. Jones and G.P. Badger (London, 1863), p. 213.

<sup>14</sup> Tenasserim in southeastern Burma (Myanmar), located on the Andaman Sea and an embarkation point for products from Siam.

which yields a very fine red dye as fine as kermes, worth 3 *cruzados* per *bahar*, while at Cairo it is worth 60.

#### Another Kingdom

Bengala;<sup>15</sup> in this kingdom there are many Moors but few Christians, and the king is Moorish. He can muster 20,000 fighting men and 10,000 horsemen. In this country there is much sugar and cloth of cotton and silk, and much silver. It lies 40 days from Calicut with a favorable wind.

#### Another kingdom

Malacca<sup>16</sup> is Christian, with a Christian king; it lies 40 days from Calecut with a fair wind. This king can muster 10,000 fighting men, that is to say 200 horse and the rest on foot. All the cloves come from here, worth 9 *cruzados* per *bahar*, and also nutmeg which is similarly worth 9 *cruzados* per *bahar*. There is also much porcelain, much silk, and much tin, from which they coin money. However, this coinage is large but is worth little, 3 *farazalas* being worth only 1 *cruzado*. There are many large parrots here, whose feathers are red like fire.

#### Another kingdom

Pegu;<sup>17</sup> is Christian with a Christian king, whose inhabitants are as white as we are. This king can muster 20,000 fighting men, that is to say 10,000 horsemen, and the others on foot, and 400 war elephants. This country produces all the musk in the world. This king possesses an island, about 2 days from the mainland with a good wind; on this island there are animals, like deer, who have pouches on their navels in which the musk is found. At a certain time of year they rub themselves against trees, and these pouches fall off, and the people of this country gather them at this time. There is so much of it that for 1 *cruzado* they

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<sup>15</sup> The Muslim sultanate of Bangala or Bengal located in the Ganges delta region of northeastern India, with Chittagong as its capital.

<sup>16</sup> Melaka, then a powerful Muslim sultanate located at the tip of the Malay peninsular along the strategic Straits of Malacca.

<sup>17</sup> Bago, port city in southern Burma (Myanmar) located on the Pegu River. It was capital of the Mon dynasty during the 15th century.

give you 4 large pouches, or 10 to 12 small ones, which would fill a large chest. On the mainland there are many rubies, and much gold, for 10 *cruzados* you can buy here as much gold as for 25 at Calecut. There is also much lac and benzoin of 2 kinds, white and black; worth 3 *cruzados* per *farazala* for the white, and 1 and a half for the black. There is also silver here, which for 10 *cruzados* paid here yields 15 in Calecut. This land lies 30 days from Calecut with a fair wind.

#### Another kingdom

Bengala:<sup>18</sup> has a Moorish, and is inhabited by both Moors and Christians, it lies 35 days from Calecut, with a fair wind. Here there are 25,000 fighting men, that is to say, 10,000 horsemen, and the rest on foot, and 400 war elephants. In this country there are the following articles of merchandise: much wheat much cloth of great value, buying this cloth here for 10 *cruzados* you will find it worth 40 in Calecut; and much silver as well.

#### Another kingdom

Conimata<sup>19</sup> has a Christian king, and also Christian people. It lies 50 days from Calecut with a fair wind. This king can muster 5000 or 6000 fighting men, and possesses 1000 war elephants. In this country there are many sapphires and much brazil-wood.

#### Another kingdom

Pater<sup>20</sup> is Christian and has a Christian king, and in this kingdom there is not a single Moor. This king can muster 4000 fighting men, and he

<sup>18</sup> This is evidently a duplicate account of Bengal.

<sup>19</sup> The most debated among these "kingdoms." Kopke argued for Timor in Indonesia, where there was a fort called Camanaça. But Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 101 n. 3, noting that there are no elephants in Timor, instead made a case for Sumatra. If this is correct, it would constitute the second consecutive duplication in the appendix. Hümmerich, however, identified it with Comar, on the west coast of Cambodia. Cf. *Estudo critico sobre o 'Roteiro' da primeira viagem de Vasco da Gama, 1497-1499* in Volume II of *Diário da Viagem de Vasco da Gama*, edited by António Baião and A. de Magalhães Basto. (2 volumes, Porto, 1945), pp. 295-300.

<sup>20</sup> Kopke and Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 102 n. 1, both identified with reservations, Pater with Pedir in northern Sumatra. Hümmerich, *Estudo critico*, pp. 295-300, suggested Patini close to the coast of Siam.

possesses 100 war elephants. In this country there is much rhubarb, worth here 9 *cruzados* per *farazalas*, and there are also many spiral rubies, and much lac, worth 4 *cruzados* per *bahar*. It lies 50 days from Calicut with a fair wind.

*[About Elephants]*

*How the Elephants Fight in this Country*

They make a house of wood, in which four men fit, and this house is put on the top of the elephant, with the four men inside.

And the elephant has five swords attached to each tusk, these are tied on; this on both tusks there are ten swords, so that they are made so fearsome that no one will await their attack, if they may instead run away.

And everything that those men riding on top order to be done is carried out as if it were a rational creature, for if they tell it "kill this one or do this thing one or another," they do it.

*How they Capture Wild Elephants as they Wander in the Forest*

When they want to capture a wild elephant, they take a tame female, and dig a large hole, where the elephants usually walk. And they cover the hole with brush, and tell the female "Go, if you find a male elephant bring him to this hole, so that he falls into it; and take care not to fall in yourself." She then goes away, and does as she has been told.

And, after coming across one, she brings him as ordered there, so that he must fall in the hole. And the hole is so deep that on his own he could never get out of it.

*How they take them out of the hole, and break them in*

After the elephants falls into the hole, they first allow 5 or 6 days to pass before giving him anything to eat; and after these days pass, a man brings him a little bit of food, and each day a bit more, until he will come over to eat; this lasts for about a month, until those who bring

him the food gradually tame him, until at last they venture down into the hole. And this is done for several days until he allows them to place his hand in his mouth. After he descends into the hole, he puts very heavy chains around the legs, and like this they train him, in such a fashion that they lack no skills except how to speak; and they are kept in stables like horses. A good elephant is worth 2000 *cruzados*.

*This is the Price for which Spices are sold in Alexandria*

First, a <i>quintal</i> <sup>21</sup> of cinnamon is worth	25 <i>cruzados</i>
A <i>quintal</i> of cloves is worth	20+es
A <i>quintal</i> of pepper is worth	15+es
A <i>quintal</i> of ginger is worth	11+es
And in Calicut a <i>bahar</i> , <sup>22</sup> equal to 5 <i>quintals</i> is worth	20+es
A <i>quintal</i> of nutmeg is worth	16+es
A <i>quintal</i> of lac is worth	25+es
A <i>quintal</i> of brazil-wood is worth	10+es
A <i>ratel</i> of rhubarb is worth	12+es
A <i>metical</i> of musk is worth	1+es
A <i>ratel</i> of aloe wood is worth	2+es
A <i>ratel</i> of benzoin is worth	1+es
A <i>quintal</i> of frankincense is worth	2+es
And in Mecca, where there is one, a <i>bahar</i> is worth 2 <i>cruzados</i>	

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<sup>21</sup> A unit of weight, originally from the Latin *centenarius* for hundredweight which in Arabic was rendered as *cantar* or *qintar* and returned to Europe as the *quintal*. In Portugal, the *quintal* was equivalent to 4 *arrobas* and 58.8 kg or 129.5 lbs.

<sup>22</sup> A unit of weight equal in India to 20 *faraçalos*.



## THE LANGUAGE OF CALICUT

### *This is the Language of Calicut*<sup>1</sup>

See, look!	No cane
Do you hear?	que que ne
Take him away!	Criane
To draw	balichene
rope	coraoo
largely	lacany
Give me!	Comda
To drink	carichany
Eat!	Tinane
Take!	y na
I do not wish to	to teda
To go away	mareçane
Go away!	poo
Come here!	baa
Be quiet!	pote
Get up!	Legany
To throw	care cane
mad, crazy	moto
serious	mōday dicany
crippled	mura call
To fall	biamçe
Many, much	balidu
hand	betall
wind	clarle
little	chiredu
Give him!	eraine
wood	mara
stone	calou
teeth	faley

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<sup>1</sup> The words in brackets [ ] have not been included in some Portuguese editions, including those of Herculano, nor in Ravenstein's translation. For an insightful analysis on this vocabulary list cf. Franz Hümmerich, *Estudo critico*, pp. 178–230.



lips	çire
nose	muco
eyes	cana
forehead	necheim
hair	talalay
head	tabu
ears	cadee
tongue	naoo
neck	caestez
[breasts]	mulay
breasts	nane
arms	carit
stomach	barri
legs	cali
[penis]	canay
[testicles]	seyrim
[ass]	cudo
hands	languajm
fingers	beda
[vagina]	cula
fish	miny or mjny
mast	mana
light	tiir
To sleep	teraquy
man	amoo
woman	pena
beard	tari
lobster	xame
parrot	tata
doves	cayniaa
[fart]	baly
To kiss	mucane
To bite	canchany
To see, look	noquany
To hear	çegade
To beat	catane
wound	morubo
sword	batany
shield	cutany
bow	cagny

arrow  
 spear  
 To shoot with bow  
 Sun  
 Moon  
 sky, heaven  
 Earth  
 sea  
 ship  
 boat  
 night  
 day  
 to eat  
 [to urinate]  
 To mount  
 To be on foot  
 To walk, go  
 To embrace  
 blows  
 To cry  
 To lift  
 To dance  
 To throw a stone or wood  
 To sing  
 rain  
 water  
 blind  
 maimed of a hand  
 [to copulate]  
 Take!  
 Let us go!  
 East  
 West  
 North  
 South  
 dog  
 bitch  
 young man  
 girl  
 house

ambum  
 concudoo  
 heany  
 nerara  
 neelan  
 mana  
 caraa  
 caralu  
 capell  
 çambuco  
 erabut  
 pagalala  
 tinane  
 matara  
 arricany  
 anicany  
 narecane  
 traigany  
 talancy  
 que ne  
 alagany  
 canechane  
 ouriany  
 fareny  
 ma jaa  
 tany  
 curuge  
 muraquay  
 panany  
 ennay  
 Pomga  
 careçache  
 mecache  
 barcangache  
 tycamgarche  
 naa  
 pena  
 hum ne  
 co poo  
 pura

needle	cu doo
rod	parima
oar	tandii
great gun, cannon	ve dii
top sail	talii
halyard	anguaa
anchor	napara
flag, standard	çoti
rudder, helm	xoca
pilot	cu pajao
shoe	cacu paja
cap	tupy

These are their names

Tenae	Aja paa	Anapa
Pumi	A rreco	Canapa
Paramganda	A xirama	Gande
Uja pee	Cuerapa	Rremaa
Quilaba	Cutotopa	Mamgala
Gouaa		

## APPENDIX I

### MEN IN DA GAMA'S FLEET

<i>Rank-Name*</i>	<i>Charge</i>
<i>Captains</i>	
1. Vasco da Gama*	Captain-Major of Fleet and of the <i>São Gabriel</i>
2. Paulo da Gama*	Brother of Vasco da Gama, Captain of <i>São Rafael</i>
3. Nicolau Coelho*	Noble of the King's Household, Captain of <i>Berrio</i>
4. Gonçalo Nunes	Retainer of Vasco da Gama, Captain of Storeship
<i>Pilots</i>	
5. Pêro de Alenquer*	Pilot of <i>São Gabriel</i> , veteran of Dias's voyage
6. João de Coimbra*	Pilot of <i>São Rafael</i> , from Setúbal
7. Pêro Escolar	Pilot of <i>Berrio</i> , veteran of Cão's 2nd Voyage
8. Afonso Gonçalves	Pilot of Storeship(?) had served in Guinea
9. Gonçalo Álvares	Pilot, Master of the <i>São Gabriel</i>
<i>Scribes-Secretaries</i>	
10. Diogo Dias*	Scribe of <i>São Gabriel</i> , brother of Bartolomeu Dias
11. João de Sá	Scribe of <i>São Rafael</i> , Commands SG to Lisbon
12. Álvaro de Braga	Scribe of <i>Berrio</i> , and later for Diogo Dias at Calicut

*Interpreters*

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 13. Fernão Martins | Sailor from Lisbon, fluent in Arabic<br>also a pilot |
| 14. Martim Afonso* | Sailor who had lived in the Congo                    |

*Sailors, Soldiers, Others*

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 15. Afonso de Selas    | From Pinhel  |
| 16. Álvaro Velho       | Most probably from Barreiro                                  |
| 17. Fernão Veloso*     | Soldier, returned with João da Nova<br>(1501–1502)           |
| 18. Francisco de Faria | Brother of Pedro, died at Cape<br>Correntes e Figueiredo     |
| 19. Pedro de Faria     | Brother of Francisco, died at Cape<br>Correntes e Figueiredo |
| 20. Gonçalo Pires      | Sailor, retainer of da Gama                                  |
| 21. João da Ameixoeira | Sailor, one of mutineers?                                    |
| 22. João de Setúbal    | Sailor, accompanied da Gama to<br>Calicut, May 1498          |
| 23. João Palha         | Accompanied da Gama to Calicut,<br>May 1498                  |
| 24. Leonardo Ribeiro   |  |
| 25. Pedro Vaz          | Sailor from Porto  |
| 26. Sancho Meixa*      |  |
| 27. Simão Gonçalves    | Caulker  |
| 28. Simão Rodrigues    | Caulker  |
| 29. Álvaro Afonso      | From Sines and retainer of Vasco da<br>Gama                  |
| 30. Francisco Lopes    | From Setúbal   |
| 31. Fernão Gonçalves   | From Lamego  |
| 32. Afonso de Melo     | Squire the royal household                                   |

*Priests*

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 33. João Figueira    | Prior of Tavira, also kept diary of<br>voyage? |
| 34. Pedro da Covilhã | Prior of Monastery of Trindade de<br>Lisboa    |

*Degredados-Convict Exiles*

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 35. Damião Rodrigues | Sailor on <i>São Gabriel</i> , deserted at SR shoals |
| 36. João Machado     | Left in Mozambique?                                  |
| 37. João Nunes       | 'New Christian,' remained in Calicut                 |
| 38. Pêro Dias        | Left in Mozambique                                   |
| 39. Pêro Esteves     | Left at Quiloa                                       |

*Captives and Others Taken on the Voyage*

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 40. Gaspar da Gama*         | Jewish Convert from Alexandria, taken at Anjediva |
| 41. Monçaide*               | Muslim from Tunis, taken at Calicut               |
| 42. Malemo Canaqua or Cana* | 'Christian' pilot who joined fleet at Malindi     |
| 43. Baltasar*               | Muslim captured at Calicut                        |

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\* Mentioned by name in the *Journal*.

## APPENDIX II

### SIXTEENTH CENTURY CHRONICLER ACCOUNTS OF THE FINAL STAGES OF THE VOYAGE AND DA GAMA'S RETURN TO LISBON

#### a. *Gaspar Correia's Lendas da India*<sup>1</sup>

#### *Chapter XXI*

... Our pilots got sight of the north star at the altitude which they used to see it in Portugal, by which they knew that they were near Portugal. They then ran due north until they sighted the islands,<sup>2</sup> at which their joy was unbounded, and they reached them, and ran along them to Terceira, at which they anchored in the port of Angra at the end of August. There the ships could hardly keep afloat by means of the pumps, and they were so old that it was a wonder how they kept above water, and many of the crews were dead, and others sick, who died on

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<sup>1</sup> Gaspar Correia (1495–1561?) was the only one from among the main 16th century Portuguese chroniclers who actually witnessed part of Vasco da Gama's career in India. He had traveled to India in ca. 1513 and for a time served as secretary to Afonso de Albuquerque during the final years of his governorship (1509–1515). Correia later compiled materials for and wrote his *Lendas da India* between 1540 and his death in the early 1560s. His account was based on manuscript sources, diaries, and personal papers he examined in Goa. Perhaps the most important of these was the diary of the priest João Figueira, who served aboard the 1497–1499 fleet. Correia personally witnessed many of the events of Vasco da Gama's third and final voyage to India as Viceroy in 1524. Since his *Lendas* were intended to be published posthumously, Correia's account is usually considered to present a fairly objective account of the establishment of Portuguese power in Asia and da Gama's career. However, in part since his dating of events differs from other chroniclers, some of the events in his account have been traditionally been questioned by later historians as well. The first Portuguese edition in 4 vols. was published by the *Academia Real das Sciencias* in Lisbon between 1858–1864. An abridged English edition was published by the Hakluyt Society, London, in 1869 as *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama and his Viceroyalty from the Lendas da India of Gaspar Correa* translated and edited by Henry E.J. Stanley. Cf. pp. 264–276.

<sup>2</sup> Gois PI C XLIV (97) stated that the ships reached the island of Santiago on the 25th April. Thereafter the ship of Nicolas Coelho was separated from that of da Gama in a storm and headed for Lisbon, reaching Cascais near the mouth of the Tagus on 10 July 1499. Castanheda LI C. XXVIII (68–69) echoed this version of events but merely noted the ships separated “one night.” Barros DI C.XI (174–175) wrote that a ‘strong storm’ near Cape Verde had separated the ships.

reaching land; there also Paulo da Gama died, for he came ailing ever since he passed the Cape, and off Guinea he took to his bed, and never again rose from it. When that happened Vasco da Gama passed over to his brother's ship, and always voyaged with him: all the crews in general had grown sick. Paulo da Gama lived only one day on shore, and was buried in the monastery of St. Francis, with great honors, and was accompanied by the Captain and all the honorable people of the island. Vasco da Gama bewailed the death of his good brother with very great regret and affliction, for he loved him much. When the ships had arrived thus at the islands, the *almoxarife* (officer of the King's duties) and the King's officials used much diligence in refitting the ships with everything they required, and they put the mariners on board of them to navigate them, because Vasco da Gama would not consent to their discharging any of the cargo from them, as they wished to do, for when they first arrived they had wished to transship the merchandise into other vessels, to make it safe, but the Captain-Major did not consent to it. As soon as the ships arrived at the island, many ships started for Lisbon to take the news to the King, as they hoped to obtain by that great favors as the reward of the good news. Afterwards, when the ships were provided with all that was necessary, they departed for Lisbon, and Vasco da Gama was so afflicted by the death of his brother, that it very much diminished his satisfaction with the great honors that he hoped for on coming to the King's presence: withal he gave great praise to the Lord, since this had been for His Holy Service. Many vessels went from the island in company with the ships and all arrived together at Lisbon, which was on the 18th day of September of the year 1499.<sup>3</sup>

### *Chapter XXII*

*On the reception and honors and favors which the King granted Vasco da Gama, and to those who had gone with him on this voyage.*

The King was staying at Sintra when there arrived one Arthur Rodriguez, a man married in the isle of Terceira; he had a carvel of his own, ready to make voyage to Algarve. He, seeing the ships come in, set sail

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<sup>3</sup> The exact date Vasco da Gama reached Lisbon has never been definitively established although it most probably took place between 29 August and 14 September 1499. Barros DI C.XI (174) and Gois PI C XLIV (97) both gave the date of 29 August; Castanheda LI C.XXIX (70) stated merely 'in September.'



without knowing whence they were coming, and so he passed by them under sail before they came to anchor, and asked from whence they came, and they answered that they came from India. He at once made his course for Lisbon, where he arrived in four days, and entered Cascaes, and got into a small boat which was going ashore, and he gave orders to a son of his who came with him not to let anyone approach to communicate with his vessel, nor to say anything of the ships from India. This Arthur Roiz on reaching land went at once with speed to Sintra, because the men of the skiff had told him that the King was there, and he set out and arrived there at one o'clock at night, and went to the King, who had just sat down at table to sup. Arthur Roiz took the King's hand and kissed it, saying 'Sire, I have kissed the hand of your Highness for the great favor which you will grant me for the so great and good news which I bring you. It is four days since I set out from Terceira, where I left two ships from India, for as I was coming under sail in a carvel of mine I passed by them, and inquired, and they told me that they came from India: and as it was such good news, I did not choose that another should come first and be before me in gaining the reward which I hope your Highness will give me.' The King was not able to continue hearing him, but went off at once to the chapel which is within the palace, where he recited his orisons and gave great praises to the Lord for the so great favor that had been vouchsafed to him. Upon this there was great excitement, and all the nobles flocked to the palace to give the King joy of his great satisfaction. The King took Arthur Roiz as a gentleman of his household, and his son as a page of the chamber, and gave him a gratification of a hundred cruzados, which the King's purser gave to him at once. The King then said to the nobles that he would start before morning for Lisbon to receive further messages, which would come following after this one, and in case the ships came, the better to see them enter Lisbon. The King arrived there the next day at dinner-time, and another message reached him, which came to win the reward of good news, and which told the King all the news of how Vasco da Gama had arrived with his crews dead and sick, and that Paulo da Gama had thus arrived, and that he had died shortly after his arrival; at which the King showed grief, and said: 'I should greatly rejoice if Vasco da Gama had come before me with his satisfaction complete, so as not to deprive me of any portion of mine which I now enjoy.' The King gave a reward to the messenger for what he related, which was that as soon as they were prepared with what they required, the ships would set out, because they came with

great labor at the pumps, from which the seamen never desisted, for the ships had opened their seams with the calms which they met with off Guinea, and with the hard work at the pumps the crews had fallen sick and died, but that many people of the island were coming in the ships, and many vessels were coming with them which would arrive with them at Lisbon. With this great pleasure the King waited until the ships arrived at the bar, where there were boats with pilots who were waiting for them, and who at once brought them in dressed out with flags, while the King was looking on from the House of the Mines, which afterwards became the India House. The ships on coming to anchor fired a salute with their artillery, and the King sent immediately Jorge de Vasconcelos, overseer of the armory of Lisbon, a chief nobleman of his household, to visit Vasco da Gama, and to say to him that the King hoped his coming would be as happy as the pleasure which he himself felt on account of it; but that the King's pleasure was much diminished by the great grief which he experienced for the death of his brother; but seeing the great favor which the Lord had granted to him, and looking well at one circumstance and the other, he ought to lay aside his grief, at which the King would be much pleased, and that he should disembark shortly. After this, many friends and relations came to the ship to visit Vasco da Gama, and they entreated him much not to go before the King with such grief and mourning as he showed and to have regard for the message which the King had sent. He consulted as to this with all his friends, and he dressed himself in a close-fitting tunic of silk (*solia*) and a round barret-cap, which looked well, and he wore his beard very long, for he had never cut it since he had departed from Lisbon. Vasco da Gama landed on the beach in front of the houses, where he was received by all the nobles of the court, and by the Count of Borba and the Bishop of Calçadilha, and he went between those two before the King, who, when he arrived, rose up from his chair and did him great honor; and Vasco da Gama on his knees told hold of his legs and kissed his hand, saying: 'Sire, all my hardships have come to an end at this moment, and I am altogether satisfied, since the Lord has brought me to the presence of your Highness at the end of all, very well as I desired.' The King said to him: 'May your coming be very fortunate; and I have such satisfaction at it, that no one feels more pleased than I: and since God has given you life until this, as you besought of Him, He will give it to you for you to receive from me the recompenses merited by the great service which you have now rendered me.' At this, Vasco da Gama kissed the King's hand. The King

then said to him: 'For my sake console yourself for the death of your brother, since it has pleased the Lord that all should remain for you, as all my hope and trust with regard to this service which I committed to you, I had reposed it in you, for which I give great praise to the Lord who has been pleased to grant me this great favor: and although your brother has died, his affairs shall not suffer had he been alive; and it shall be the same for all those who died as for those who have remained alive.' Then the King mounted his horse, and went to the palace above the alcasoba, where his apartments then were, and took Vasco da Gama with him, who, on entering where the Queen was, kissed her hand, and she did him great honor. The King then dismissed him to go and rest himself, and bade him come [the] next day to recount to him his labors and hardships, and give his orders as to what was to be done in the ships: upon which Vasco da Gama took his leave and went to his house, accompanied by many people. The King sent orders to the officers of the House of the Mines not to do anything, nor move anything in the ships except what Vasco da Gama ordered, and they were to go and ask him, and do whatever they commanded; and they did this and went to give him the message which the King had sent. Then Vasco da Gama ordered that a good guard should be set in the ships, and that the crews should be sent to their homes, and should take with them all their clothes and property, with the exception of the master and pilot, whom he had to present in irons to the King, as he brought them as prisoners, and that they (the messengers) should go and tell the King of this, and the cause of it. So they went at once to tell the King this and the cause of it, and when he heard it, he sent word to Vasco da Gama that, since he had arrested them, he might order them to be executed or set at liberty, and he might do with them whatever, was his will, as he gave him full and entire jurisdiction over them and as many as came with him. Vasco da Gama then sent to summon the prisoners to his house, and said to them: 'I have fulfilled my word in delivering you up in irons to the King, and I have sent to tell him of your offences, and he has left the punishment of them to me; thus I pardon you freely, on account of your hardships; now I will comply with my word as to the recompense which I promised you for your services: go in peace and rest yourselves with your wives and children, with whom you will now live with more ease and pleasure than you would have had if you had returned, flying from fear of the storms, and bringing your captain a prisoner as you had determined to do.' To this they had nothing to answer, but only fell upon their knees with

their hands raised to heaven, and said: 'Sir, may you have your reward from God.' Vasco da Gama sent them to their houses, and ordered that they should take out of the ship all their property. Then he ordered them to disembark and bring to his house the Moorish pilots, and the captives, and the Jew, and all were now wearing the clothes which Vasco da Gama had ordered to be made for them upon leaving Terceira. Next day in the morning Vasco da Gama went to the palace, and found the King on the wardrobe, where he was standing dressing himself. On his entrance the King made him very welcome with smiles and pleasant words, and called to him, saying, 'Dom Vasco da Gama, you have rested but little.' Dom Vasco, with one knee on the ground, kissed his hand for the favor of the title of Dom which he had given him. The King told him that he gave it to him for the whole of his lineage, and continued talking to him of the pleasure he felt, and then went to mass, where Dom Vasco stood within the curtain speaking to the King, and for a long space of time after mass, during which he gave the King many details of his affairs. After that they went to the house of the Queen, whither Dom Vasco sent to summon Nicolas Coelho to come from the ship, who brought a chest in which came all the jewels and stuffs for the King. When he had come in, Dom Vasco presented him to the King, and said: 'Sire, Nicolas Coelho has not been of little account in the hardships and services, and your Highness will show him favors according to his merits.' To this, the King replied: 'Dom Vasco, it shall all be as you desire.' Then he kissed the King's hand, which Nicolas Coelho did also, and then opened the chest, and presented on the Queen's dais the necklaces and jewels and stuffs of the Kings of Cananor and of Melinde, and the letters on the leaves of gold, and the piece of ambergris, which was what the Queen valued the most; also the musk and porcelain which had been bought in Calecut; and when all had been gathered together, Vasco da Gama remained there relating all the principal events which had happened during his voyage, while all the principal gentlemen of the kingdom were present, for the King wished that they should learn how great a service Dom Vasco had rendered to him. They all offered great congratulations upon it to the King, on account of the great pleasure which they saw that he took in it, and all desired [to have performed] the services of Dom Vasco, and [to possess] the dignities which he held by a grant, and they greatly extolled the deserts of Dom Vasco. While Dom Vasco da Gama was relating to the King the kindness of the King of Melinde, he told him that he had in his house two pilots whom that King had given to him, expressing

a great desire that they should see with their own eyes the things of Portugal, to relate them to him on their return. The King rejoiced much at this, and told Dom Vasco to employ a man to go about with them and show them all the things which it seemed to him desirable for them to see; and this was done, and all the good things of Portugal were shown to them, especially the King and Queen, with her ladies, on feast days, and at the royal dance, and the King's banquet, and the sports with bulls and canes (jerid), and the churches and splendid palaces, and the monastery of Batalha: all which the pilots wrote down and took notes of. Dom Vasco also gave an account to the King of the Jew whom he had brought and of the other captives whom he had taken in Angediva. The King told him that they were all his, to do what he pleased with. All of them became Christians, for Dom Vasco took care of them all and treated them well, especially the Jew, who received the name Gaspar da Gama, because he took him as his godson at baptism: the King spoke to this Jew frequently, and took pleasure in listening to what he related, on which account the King did him many favors, and gave him many dresses from his own wardrobe, and horses from his stables, and servants from among those who became Christian whom Dom Vasco gave to him; and all the people used to call him Gaspar of the Indies, for so he wished them to name him. After that the King ordered Dom Vasco to dispose and give orders for the payment of the crews of the ships as he thought fit, since he knew their deserts better than anyone else, and the ships had now discharged their cargo. So he ordered that the officials should give to each man all that they had brought freely, and that to each man should be given ten pounds of each spice for their wives to divide with their gossips and friends, so that all might be pleased. When the cargo was taken out, all the pepper and drugs were weighed; the King ordered his officials to draw up and account of all the expense of the three ships and the merchandise and things which they had taken out, and the recompenses and pay of the captains and crews, because all had remained written down up to their departure from Belem: and all this having been reckoned up, and also the value of the return goods, it was found that for each one there was a profit of sixty. Then the King granted to Dom Vasco a perpetual right of two hundred *cruzados* which he might lay out each year, of his own money, on cinnamon in Cananor, as that was the first country on the coast of India with which he had established relations. These purchases he might stow on board any ship whatever without paying freight or duties, and he might bring them free of charge to his house to be

weighed, that they might not be in excess; and even though there should not be more than one ship only, he might stow them in it: and if during one year he put nothing on board, if it were not by his own default, he was to be at liberty during the following year or years to put all this cargo on board without missing that of any year. This the King granted to him, as long as India lasted, for an inheritance of his principal heir. In addition to this, he gave him a gratification of twenty thousand *cruzados* in gold, which the official carried to his house, and he granted to him ten *quintals* of pepper and of each drug to distribute amongst his friends, and he was allowed to carry all his goods to his house without paying any duty. The King commanded a proclamation to be made for all the survivors and heirs of the deceased sailors to come and receive all that was due to them [reckoning] up the time when the ships entered Lisbon. To each of the masters and pilots half a *quintal* of each drug was given, with the exception of cinnamon and mace because the ships had brought little of it. The King prohibited their selling any of it; they were only to use it and divide among their friends. To the heirs of the deceased no drugs were given, only there was given to them the right to the half of their value. All this was done according to arrangements made by Dom Vasco. The King gave a grant to Nicolas Coelho of three thousand *cruzados* per month for all the time that the voyage had lasted, and one *quintal* of all the drugs, and his good free; and the captaincy of a ship for India in all the fleets in which he might choose to go, which he might give away or sell. To the heirs of Paulo da Gama the King gave the half of all that he had given to Dom Vasco, excepting the taking in cargo of ginger. On the whole, great favors and recompenses were given to one and all; because, at that time, the *quintal* of pepper was worth in Lisbon eighty *cruzados*; that of cinnamon one hundred and eighty; that of cloves two hundred; that of ginger one hundred and twenty; that of mace three hundred; and the *quintal* of numeg one hundred. With these grants and salaries all remained rich and satisfied. The King in his great happiness gave great praises to the Lord, who had vouchsafed such great favor to him at the commencement of his reign; he sent, through the Bishop of Guarda, an offering to Our Lady of Guadalupe; he went with Dom Vasco to offer the necklace which the King of Cananor had given, with some rich stuffs, and a bag full of each kind of drug, and a piece of benzoin for the use of the convent. He also gave a large offering to the monastery of Belem, and to other holy houses, and convents of nuns, that all might give thanks and praises to the Lord for the great favor which He

had shown to Portugal; this was also strongly enjoined in all the sermons and stations throughout all the churches. The King and Queen went in solemn procession from the cathedral to Sam Domingo, where Calçadilha preached on the grandeur of India, and on the so great and miraculous discovery of it which the Lord had granted, and the good beginning which had been made for whatever more might please the Lord. So that he greatly stimulated and inclined the hearts of men to go thither to win honor and profit, such as they saw in the case of those who had come from thence. Then the King shortly after arranged for sending to India, another large fleet of great and strong ships which could stow much cargo, and which, if they returned in safety, would bring untold riches: all this was talked over and arranged with Dom Vasco, to whom the King gave a patent, by which he was to go as captain-major in any fleet which should sail for India; and by it he would be able to take the captaincy, notwithstanding its having been given to any other person, and he could put himself in a fleet which might already be at Belem on the point of departure; and in any fleet in which he might go as captain-major he might remove or appoint the captains of the ships according to his will and pleasure, notwithstanding that the ships had already got captains, since the King gave him all power to make and unmake in the fleet all that he chose, without the King's remaining on that account under any obligation towards them.

Reckoning up from the day that Dom Vasco left Lisbon until the day on which he entered it, he went thirty-two months in this voyage, in which it pleased the Lord in His mercy that it should have been for His holy service, for which God the Most High be praised, as it appears at the present day by the great exaltation of His holy Catholic faith, and the wonderful increase of so many Christians communities in all parts of India, which it has pleased Him to grant to us in our days. All which may it be for His holy praise forever. Amen.

b. *Fernão Lopes de Castanheda's Historia do Descobrimento & Conquista da Índia Pelos Portugueses*<sup>4</sup>

*Chapters XXVIII–XXIX*

While Vasco da Gama and Nicolas Coelho were sailing for the island of Santiago, Nicolas Coelho separated himself one night and set a course for Portugal in order to go there and inform the King D. Manuel how India had been discovered, and to win the rewards which such good news would engender from the King. And on the 10th day of July of the year 1499, he reached the town of Cascaes. And learning there that the King D. Manuel was then at the town of Sintra, he disembarked and headed directly there and he told the King everything that had happened to Vasco da Gama since his departure from Portugal, of his arrival at Calicut, and of his return from there, which made the King as pleased as could be, and he gave him many rewards... Meanwhile, Vasco da Gama finding himself separated from Nicolas Coelho, waited for him for an entire day but when he did not appear, he continued his course for the island of Santiago, where upon arriving he charted a caravel in which he might returned to Portugal, in part since his ship was taking on water and making little headway, and also since his brother Paulo da Gama was very ill, and he named as captain of the ship João de Sá his scribe. Upon leaving this island, Vasco da Gama found that his brother's illness grew worse each day, and this forced him to put into the island of Terceira, where he ordered him placed ashore, and there he died as the very good Christian that he was, and he reached Belem in September of the year 1499, it having been 2 years and 2 months since he had departed from there with 148 men, of which he did not return with more than 55, which was in fact a good number given the immense struggles they had overcome, including fierce storms and terrible illnesses, and from that place Vasco da Gama sent a message to the King announcing his arrival. Upon receiving this joyous news,

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<sup>4</sup> Fernão Lopes de Castanheda (1500?–1559) traveled to India in 1528, four years after Vasco da Gama's death in Cochín. His *Historia do descobrimento e conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses* was based on extensive research with manuscript documents in India and discussions with eyewitnesses. His account was the first to be published by the main Portuguese chroniclers (1551–1561) and was known for its meticulous attention to dates and detail. It was translated into English by Nicholas Lichefield (most probably a pseudonym for the Tudor translator Thomas Nicholas) as *The First Booke of the Historie of the Discoverie and Conquest of the East Indies* (London, 1582). Cf. Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* Volume I (Chicago, 1977) p. 189.



the King ordered Dom Diogo da Silva de Meneses, count of Portalegre to go and greet him with many nobles, and they then escorted him to court, where it was nearly impossible to arrive given the multitude of people who had gone there to see the entrance of Vasco da Gama, both because he had done such a great thing in discovering India, as because they had all assumed he was dead, and the King gave him such great honors, as one merited who by the discovery of India had brought such great glory to eternal God, and honor and profit to the Crown and kingdom of Portugal, and perpetual fame in all the world. And to reward such services, the King granted him the title of Dom, and in his coat of arms allowed him to use the royal arms of Portugal, and annual pension of 300,000 *reais* derived from the fishing tithe of the town of Sines, with the promise of one day making him Lord of that place, since he was a native of that town...And thanks to this new discovery the King Dom Manuel was able to increase his own titles with a new and famous one as Lord of the Conquest and Navigation of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and of the Indies.

### APPENDIX III

#### CONTEMPORARY LETTERS DESCRIBING THE VOYAGE

a. *Letter from D. Manuel I to Ferdinand and Isabella, 12 July 1499*<sup>1</sup>

Most High and Most Excellent Prince and Princess, and most powerful Lord and Lady!

Your Highnesses already know that we had ordered Vasco da Gama, a nobleman of our household, and with him Paulo da Gama, his brother, with four vessels, to make discoveries by sea, and that two years have now elapsed since their departure. And as the principal motive of this enterprise has always been, as with our predecessors, the service of our Lord God, and our own advantage, it pleased Him in his Mercy to speed them on their route. From a message which has now been brought to this city by one of the Captains, we learn that they did reach and discover India and other kingdoms and lordships bordering it; and they entered and navigated that sea, in which they found large cities, edifices and rivers, and great populations, among whom is carried on all the trade in spices and precious stones, which are forwarded in ships which these same discoverers saw and found in good numbers and great size, to Mecca, and thence to Cairo, from whence they are dispersed throughout the world. Of these they have brought a quantity, including cinnamon, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, and pepper, as well as other kinds of spices, together with the branches and leaves of the same; and many fine stones of all sorts, such as rubies and others. And they also found a country in which there are gold mines, of which, as of the spices and precious stones, they did not bring as much as they could have done, for they took no merchandise with them.

And because we know that Your Highnesses will hear of these things with much pleasure and satisfaction, we thought it well to give you

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<sup>1</sup> A first draft of this letter is found in ANTT *Collecção de S. Vicente* T.III, fol. 515, and a dated copy of the letter that was sent on fol. 513. For edited versions of these two versions, cf. João Martins da Silva Marques, *Descobrimentos Portugueses* vol. III (Lisbon, 1971), pp. 671–672 and pp. 673–674, also given in Teixeira de Aragão, *Vasco da Gama e a Vidigueira*, pp. 217–218; and translated by Ravenstein, *Journal*, pp. 113–114.

this notification: And Your Highnesses may believe, in accordance with what we have learnt concerning the Christian people whom these discoverers reached, that it will be possible, notwithstanding that they are not as yet strong in the faith or possessed of a thorough knowledge of it, to do much in the service of God and the exaltation of the Holy Faith, once they shall have been converted and fully confirmed in it. And when they shall have thus been confirmed in the faith there will be an opportunity for destroying the Moors of those parts. Moreover, we hope, with the help of God, that the great trade, which now enriches the Moors of those parts, through whose hands it passes without the intervention of other persons or peoples, shall in consequence of our regulations be diverted to the natives and ships of our own kingdom, so that henceforth all Christendom, in this part of Europe, shall be able, in large measure, to provide itself with these spices and precious stones. This, with the help of this same God, who in His Mercy thus ordained it, will cause our designs and intentions to be pushed with more ardor in executing in his service the war upon the Moors of the territories conquered by us in these parts, which Your Highnesses are so firmly resolved upon, and in which we are equally zealous.

And we pray Your Highnesses, in consideration of this great favor, which, with much gratitude, we received from Our Lord, to cause to be addressed to Him those praises which are His due.

Most High and Most Excellent Prince and Princess, and most powerful Lord and Lady, may the Lord our God ever hold your persons and kingdoms in His Holy keeping.

Written at Lisbon, July 1499.

b. *Letter from D. Manuel I to the Cardinal Protector Dom Jorge da Costa at Rome, 28 August 1499*<sup>2</sup>

Most Reverend Father in Christ, whom we love as much as a brother!

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<sup>2</sup> Two copies found in ANTT Collecção de S. Vicente, Livro 3 fo. 513 and Livro 14 fo. 1.

We, Dom Manuel, by the Grace of God, King of Portugal and of the Algarves on this side and beyond the sea, in Africa, Lord of Guinea and of the Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India,<sup>3</sup> We send to recommend to your Reverence...very great news...Our Lord having ended our labors in the exploration of Ethiopia and India, of other countries, and eastern lands...we inform you with pleasure...and so that you may know the progress of events we enclose the draft of a letter which we wrote to the Holy Father...Beyond what we wrote to his Holiness, your reverence must know that those who have just returned from this investigation and discovery visited, among other ports of India, a city called Qualicut, from which they brought us cinnamon, cloves...the King looks upon himself and the major part of his people as Christian<sup>4</sup>...throughout the year there are found there cucumbers, oranges, lemons, and citrons...there are great fleets...The island of Taprobane, which is called Ceilam, is 150 leagues from Qualicut...Our people brought five or six Indians from Qualicut...moreover a Moor of Tunes...and a Jew, who turned Christian, and who is a merchant and lapidary, and well acquainted with the coasts from Alexandria to India, and beyond with the interior and Tartary as far as the major sea.<sup>5</sup>

...As soon as we had this news we ordered general processions to be made throughout our kingdom, returning many thanks to Our Lord...His Holiness and your Reverence ought to publicly rejoice no less and give many praises to God. Also, whereas by Apostolical grants we enjoy very fully the sovereignty and dominion of all we have discovered, in such a manner that little or nothing else seems needed, yet would it please us, and we affectionately beg that after you should have handed our letters to the Holy Father and the College of Cardinals, it may please you, speaking in this as if from yourself, to ask for a fresh expression of satisfaction with reference to a matter of such novelty and great and recent merit, so as to obtain His Holiness's renewed approval

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<sup>3</sup> D. Manuel had taken these new titles in the wake of the return of the fleet.

<sup>4</sup> It is significant that D. Manuel based on his conversations with Nicolau Coelho, Gaspar da Gama and perhaps Vasco da Gama adopted the stance that the Samorin and most of his subjects were indeed Christian. Compare this view with that below of Girolamo Sernigi.

<sup>5</sup> That is to say Monçaide and Gaspar da Gama, whose expertise was in demand both at court and with foreign merchants in Lisbon including Sernigi.

and declaration, in such form as may appear best to you, most Reverend Father, whom our Lord hold in his keeping.

Written at Lisbon, August 28 1499

The King

c. *Girolamo Sernigi's First Letter to a Gentleman at Florence*<sup>6</sup>

[Background]

The most illustrious Lord Manoel of Portugal sent 3 new vessels to discover new countries, namely 2 vessels of 90 tons each, and one of 50 tons, in addition to which there was a ship, of one hundred and ten tons, laden with provisions. Between them they took away cxviiij men,<sup>7</sup> and they left this city of Lisbon on July 9, 1497.<sup>8</sup> Vasco da Gama went as Captain of this fleet.

[Details of Voyage]

On July X 1499 the vessel of 50 tons came back to this city.<sup>9</sup> The captain, Vasco da Gama remained at the Cape Verde islands with one of the

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<sup>6</sup> Sernigi was born in Florence in 1453, the son of Cipriano di Chimenti, a respected member of the Clothiers' Guild in that city. By the summer of 1499, he had settled in Lisbon as a merchant and moved in the active Italian business community there. Among his associates was Bartolomeo Marchionni, who may have sent Sernigi out as captain aboard the 1501 fleet of João de Nova. Between 1503 and 1506, Sernigi was also a member of the merchant consortiums which played a role in outfitting the fleets which D. Manuel sent to India. In 1510, Sernigi commanded one of the ships that went out to Melaka under Diogo Mendez de Vasconcellos. This first letter was written sometime around 10 July 1499 after the return of Coelho's ship, the *Berrio*, and based on his conversations with the crew. For a manuscript copy of this letter, cf. Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence, Codex 1910 fo. 61r (a). It can also be found in Carmen M. Radulet, *Vasco da Gama: La prima circumnavigazione dell'Africa, 1497-1499* (Reggio Emilia, 1994), pp. 169-181. Cf. also her "Girolamo Sernigi e a importância económica do Oriente" *Revista da Universidade de Coimbra* 32 (1985) pp. 67-77; Ravenstein, *Journal*, pp. 119-136; Subrahmanayam, *Career and Legend*, pp. 149-154, 182; and Rolf Walter, "High Finance Interrelated: International Consortiums in the Commercial World of the 16th Century," *XIV International Economic History Conference*, Helsinki (2006), pp. 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> Góis PI, C.XLIV (97) and Castanheda L.I C.XXIX (70-71) gave the number of 148, while Gaspar Correia *The Three Voyages*, p. 38, gave the highest estimate of around 260. The generally accepted one is the one given by Barros DI C.II (134) of 170.

<sup>8</sup> The generally accepted date as stated in the *Journal* is 8 July 1497. While Barros DI CII (133), Castanheda LI CII (9) and Góis PI C. XXXV (67) all adopt this date, Correia, *The Three Voyages*, p. 37, rather inexplicitly gave the 25th March.

<sup>9</sup> This was the *Berrio* commanded by Nicolau Coelho.

vessels of 90 tons in order to land there his brother Paulo da Gama, who was very ill. The other vessel of 90 tons was burnt because there were not people enough to navigate and steer her. The store-ship was also burnt, for it was not intended that she return.

In the course of the voyage 55 men died from a disease which first attacked the mouth, and then descended to the throat; they also suffered great pain in the legs from the knee downward.<sup>10</sup>

They discovered 1800 leagues (each league being equal to  $4\frac{1}{4}$  of our miles) of new land beyond the Cape of Good Hope, which Cape was first discovered in the time of King John.<sup>11</sup> Beyond that Cape they followed the coast for about 600 leagues<sup>12</sup> and met with a dense population of black people. And when they had made these 600 leagues they discovered a large river, and at the mouth of that river a great village inhabited by black people, who are, as it were, subject to the Moors. These Moors live in the interior of the country, and continually make war upon the blacks. And in this river, according to these blacks, are found immense quantities (infinite) of gold; and they told the Captain that if he would wait a moon, that is a month, they would give him gold in plenty. But the Captain would not wait, and went about 350 leagues further, and discovered a great walled city, with very good stone houses in the Moorish style, inhabited by Moors of the color of Indians. There the Captain landed, and the Moorish king of this city received him with much feasting, and gave him a pilot for crossing the gulf. This city is called Melinde, and lies at the entrance of a gulf, the while of which is peopled by Moors. This pilot spoke Italian.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The estimates on the number of deaths on the voyage ranged from 83 to 93. Of these 55 may have been directly from scurvy, but the main chroniclers like Castanheda LI C.XXIX (70–71), and Góis PI CXLIV (97) give 55 as the number of men who ultimately returned from the voyage as well. For those who adopt the figure of 148 for the number of men aboard the fleet at the outset, this would mean that 93 died overall.

<sup>11</sup> According to Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 124 n. 3, the actual number was closer to 860 leagues (at  $17\frac{1}{2}$  leagues to the degree).

<sup>12</sup> From the Cape of Good Hope to the River of 'Good Signs' or Quilimane is about 460 leagues. Cf. Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 124 n. 4.

<sup>13</sup> This may have been a reference to Gaspar da Gama.

*[The Arabian Sea]*

This gulf is above 700 leagues across, and they crossed it from side to side, and came to a very large city, larger than Lisbon, inhabited by Christians, and called Chalichut.<sup>14</sup>

On both sides of this gulf there is a dense population of Moors, with great towns and castles. At the termination of this gulf there is a strait like that of Romania, and having passed through this strait there is another and greater gulf, which is the Red Sea. And from the right hand of this to the house of Mecca, where is the tomb of Mohammed, is 3 days journey by land. At the said house of Mecca is a very great town of the Moors. I am of the opinion that this is the Gulf of Arabia, concerning which Pliny wrote that Alexander the Great went there, to make war, as also did the Romans, who took all by war.

*[Chalichut]*

Let us return to the above named city of Chalichut, which is bigger than Lisbon, and peopled by Christian Indians, as said. In this city there are churches with bells, but there are no priests, and the divine offices are not performed nor sacrificial [masses] celebrated, but in each church there is a pillar holding water, in the manner of the fonts holding our holy water, and a second pillar with balm. They bathe once every 3 years in a river which is near the city. The houses in this city are of stone and mortar, in the Moorish style, and the roads laid out and straight as are these.

*[The Royal Audience]*

And the King of this city is waited upon in grand style, and keeps regal state, having his chamberlains, door keepers, and barons, as also a very sumptuous palace. When the Captain of the said vessel arrived at the city the king was away at a castle at a distance of about 6 leagues, and having been informed that Christians had arrived he at once came to the city attended by about 5000 persons. After the lapse of 3 days

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<sup>14</sup> It is significant that in this letter of July, Sernigi accepted the stories he had heard from Coelho's crew that the inhabitants of Calicut were indeed Christian. He would promptly change this view in his second letter from Lisbon after the return of João de Sá commanding the *São Gabriel* and later Vasco da Gama.

the king sent for the Captain, who had stayed aboard his vessel. The Captain, with xii of his men, went at once, and about 5000 persons accompanied him from the shore as far as the palace of the king, at the gate of which stood x doorkeepers with silver mounted sticks. Having entered, he proceeded to a chamber where the King reposed upon a low couch. The whole of the floor was covered with green velvet, while around it was drapery of variously colored damask. The couch had a very fine white coverlet, all worked with gold thread, and above it was a canopy, very white, delicate and sumptuous.

The King at once asked the Captain what he had come to seek. The Captain replied that it was the custom among Christians that when an ambassador had to deliver his message to a prince he should do so in secret and not in public. The King, upon hearing this, ordered all his people outside. The Captain then said that the King of Portugal had long since heard of his Highness and that he was a Christian king. Being desirous of his friendship he had been ordered to visit him, as was the custom between Christian kings.

The King received this message most graciously, and ordered the Christian captain to be lodged in the house of a very rich Moor.

*[Muslim Merchants and the Spice Trade]*

In this city there reside many very wealthy Moorish merchants, and all the trade is in their hands. They have a fine mosque, in the square of the town. The King is, as it were, governed by these Moors because of the presents which they give him; and owing to their industry, the government is wholly in their hands, for these Christians are coarse people.

All kinds of spices are to be found in this city of Chalichut, such as cinnamon, pepper, ginger, frankincense, lac: and brazil-wood abounds in the forests. These spices do not grow here, but in a certain island at a distance of 160 leagues from this city near the mainland. It can be reached overland in xx days and is inhabited by Moors. All the above spices are brought to this city as to a staple.

The coins most in circulation in this city are serafins of fine gold, coined by the Sultan of Babylonia, which weigh 2 or 3 grains less than



a ducat, and are called serafins. There also circulate some Venetian and Genoese ducats, as also small silver coins, which must likewise be of the coinage of the said sultan.

There is an abundance of silken stuffs, namely, velvets of various colors, satins, damask, taffetas, brocades worked in gold, scarlet cloth, brass and tin ware. In fact, all these things are to be found in abundance, and it is my opinion that the cloths worked in gold and the silks are brought there from Cairo.

The Portuguese remained three months at that town, namely, from May 21 to August 25, and during that time, there arrived about 1,500 Moorish vessels in search of spices. The largest of these vessels did not exceed 800 tons. They are of all sorts, large and small. Having only one mast they can make headway only with the wind astern, and sometimes are obliged to wait from four to six months for fair weather [the monsoon]. Many of these vessels are lost. They are badly built, and very frail. They carry neither arms nor artillery.

The vessels which visit the islands to carry spices to this city of Chulichut are flat-bottomed, so as to draw little water, for there are many dry places (shoals). Some of these vessels are built without any nails or iron, for they have to pass over the loadstone.

All the vessels, as long as they remained at this city, are drawn up on the beach, for there is no port where they would be safe otherwise.

A load of cinnamon equal to 5 Lisbon cantars is worth in that city between x and xii ducats or serafins, at most; but in the islands where it is collected it is worth only half that sum. Pepper and cloves are rated similarly. Ginger and cinnamon are worth more than any other spices, but lac is worth next to nothing, and they ballast their vessels with it, that is calk them. Brazil-wood abounds in the forest.

In payment they only take gold and silver; coral and other merchandise of our parts they esteem but little, linen cloth excepted, which I believe would find a ready market, as the sailors bartered some of their shirts very profitably for spices, although very fine white linen cloth, probably imported from Cairo, is found there.

There is a customs-house in this city as elsewhere, and merchandise pays a duty of 5 p.c.

The Portuguese who returned home brought a few precious stones of little value, for, in truth, they had neither gold nor silver to buy any. They say these jewels are very dear there, as also are pearls, but I believe they are to be had cheap. This is my opinion, but those they bought were in the hands of the Moorish brokers, who sell at fourfold profit. They have brought some balasci [pink rubies], sapphires, and very small rubies, as also many garnets. They say the Captain brings some valuable jewels, which he bought with the silver which he had at his disposal, but as he has not yet come back it is not known what he brings.

*[Trade with Egypt and East Africa]*

Most of the vessels which load spices at Chalichut cross the large gulf, mentioned above, over which the pilot took them; then pass through the strait.<sup>15</sup> The Red Sea is crossed in smaller vessels, after which they proceed by land to the House of Mecca, which is a journey of 3 days. They then take the route to Cairo, past the foot of Mount Sinai, and through a desert of sand where, they say, high winds sometimes raise the sand in such a manner that it covers them. Some of the spice-vessels visit all the cities of the gulf, others go to the mouth of the great river, where gold is found and a Moorish population, and there discharge their cargoes.

They found in this city of Chalichut barrels of Malavasias [Greek wine] from Candia, and I believe that they were brought from Cairo, as is other merchandise.

*[Chinese Visitors]*

It is now about 80 years since there arrived in this city of Chalichut certain vessels of white Christians, who wore their hair long like Germans, and had no beards except around the mouth, such as are worn at Constantinople by cavaliers and courtiers. They landed, wearing a

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<sup>15</sup> Bab-el-Mandeb, connecting the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and hence the Indian Ocean.

cuirass, helmet, and visor, and carrying a certain weapon [sword?] attached to a spear. Their vessels are armed with bombards, shorter than those in use with us. Once every two years they return[ed] with 20 or 25 vessels. They are unable to tell what people they are, nor what merchandise they bring to this city, save that it includes very fine linen-cloth and brass-ware. They load spices. Their vessels have four masts like those of Spain. If they were Germans it seems to me that we should have had some notice about them; possibly they may be Russians if they have a port there. On the arrival of the Captain we may learn who these people are, for the Italian speaking pilot, who was given to him by the Moorish king, and whom he took away contrary to his inclinations, is with him, and may be able to tell.<sup>16</sup>

*[Food]*

Corn in abundance is found in this city of Chalichut, it being brought there by the Moors. For 3 reals which are smaller than ours, bread sufficient for the daily sustenance of a man can be purchased. Their bread is unleavened, resembling small cakes, which are baked daily in the ashes. Rice, likewise, is found in abundance. There are cows and oxen. They are small but yield much milk and butter. Oranges of indifferent flavor, are plentiful, as also lemons, citrons, and limes, very good melons, dates fresh and dried, and a great variety of other fruit.

The King of this city of Chalichut eats neither of meat nor fish nor anything that has been killed, nor do his barons, courtiers, or other persons of quality, for they say that Jesus Christ said in his law that he who kills shall die. For this reason they refuse to eat anything that has been killed, and it is a great thing that they should be able to support themselves without eating meat or fish. The common people eat meat and fish, but they do not eat oxen or cows, for they hold these animals to be blessed (*benedetto*), and when they meet an ox on the highway they touch him, and afterwards kiss his hand, as a sign of great humility.

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<sup>16</sup> A reference to the Chinese admiral Zheng He's voyages to the Malabar coast during the Ming dynasty during the initial decades of the 15th century. Cf. Edward L. Dreyer, *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433* (New York, 2006).

The King lives on rice, milk and butter, and so do his barons and some of the other men of quality. And the King is waited upon right royally at his table. He drinks palm-wine out of a silver cup. This cup he does not put to his mouth, but holds at some distance and pours the wine down his throat.

The fish are of the same kinds as are those of Portugal, namely, perch, soles, bream, salmon, mullets, and so of all other kinds. And there are fishermen who go a-fishing [for soles and salmon].

*[Elephants]*

The Christians ride on elephants, of whom there are many: they are domesticated. When the King goes to war most of his people go on foot, but some are mounted on elephants; but when he goes from place to place he causes himself to be carried by some among the principal men of his court.

*[Dress]*

All or most of these people are clothed in cotton-cloths from the waist down to the knee, but from the waist upwards they go naked. Courtiers and men of condition dress in the same manner, but make use of silk-stuffs, reddish or scarlet or of other colors, as seems good to them. The wives (ladies) of men of condition are clothed above the girdle in very white and delicate linen; but the wives of the lower degree are naked above waist. The Moors dress according to their custom in jubbi and balandrau.

*[Navigation]*

From this city of Chalichut to Lisbon is a distance of 3800 leagues, and at the rate of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the league this makes 17,100 miles, and as much again for the return voyage. From this the time in which such a voyage can be made may be judged, it requiring from 15 to 16 months.<sup>17</sup>

The mariners of that part, namely the Moors, do not guide themselves by the Pole in navigating this gulf, but trust to quadrants of wood. When

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<sup>17</sup> According to Ravenstein, *Journal*, p. 134 n. 3, the actual distance from Calicut to Lisbon is ca. 3060 Portuguese leagues or 10,500 nautical miles.

they cross the gulf to that side, so they were told by the pilot, they leave a thousand or more islands to the right; and whoever gets among these will be lost as there are many rocks (shoals), and I am inclined to think that they be those which were discovered by the King of Castile.

*[Prester John]*

At the city of Chalichut they have some knowledge of Prester John, but not much, as he is far away. These Christians believe that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, without sin, was crucified and killed by the Jews, and buried at Jerusalem. They also have some knowledge of the Pope of Rome, but know nothing of our faith beyond this. They [the people of Prester John] have letters and a written language.

*[Articles of Commerce]*

In this city are found many tusks of elephants, also much cotton, sugar and sweetmeats, and all the wealth of the world seems now to have been discovered.

I presume that wine would prove a good article in these parts, and very acceptable to these Christians. Oil, too, is in demand.

Justice is strictly administered in this city. Robbers, murderers, and other malefactors are incontinently impaled in the Turkish fashion; and whoever defrauds the king's excise (customs) is punished by having his merchandise confiscated. Civet, musk, ambergris and storax are met with.

*[The Spice Islands]*

The island where the spices grow is called Zilon, and is 60 leagues from said city.<sup>18</sup> In that island grow trees which yield very good cinnamon; as also pepper. However, there is still another island [in which spices grow]. Cinnamon and pepper also grow on the mainland, around this city, but the quality is inferior to the products of the islands. Ginger grows on the mainland, and is of very good quality. Cloves grow at

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<sup>18</sup> Ceylon which is about 160 leagues from Calicut.

a great distance. Of rhubarb there is much, and many other kinds of spices are found there, as also many almonds.

*[The Arabian Sea]*

I stated above that the gulf was wholly peopled by Moors, and I have since learned that this is not the case. Only the shore on this side [the west], where is the city of Melinde, is wholly inhabited by white Moors, while the further [eastern] shore is peopled by Christian Indians, who are white as we are. Along the coast and throughout the mainland much corn, meat, and fruit are produced.

The country around the city of Melinde is very fertile, and many of these provisions are shipped from it to Chalichut, for most of the land around the latter is sandy and yields no fruit.

*[The Monsoons]*

There are only two dominant winds in those parts, namely westerly and easterly winds, and it is winter during the former and summer during the later.

*[Artists]*

There are many excellent painters in this city of Ghalinde [Calicut], of figures as well as other subjects.

*[Architecture]*

Neither Ghalinde nor any of the other cities is enclosed within walls or otherwise, but there are many good houses, built in the Moorish style, of stone and mortar, and streets regularly laid out (ordinate).

*[Ceylon]*

In the island of Zilon, where the cinnamon grows, are found many precious stones and the biggest sapphires.

d. *Girolamo Sernigi's Second Letter to a Gentleman at Florence*<sup>19</sup>

Since I sent you full particulars about India and its discovery there has arrived here the pilot they took by force. He appeared to be a Sclavonian and turns out to be a Jew, born at Alexandria, or in those parts, and thence went to India when very young. At Calichut he has a wife and children. He owned a ship and went several times to sea.<sup>20</sup>

*[Spices]*

This man told wonderful things about those countries, and their wealth in spices. The best and finest cinnamon is procured from another island [Ceylon], about 150 leagues beyond Calichut and very near the mainland. This island is inhabited by Moors. Pepper and cloves come from more distant parts.

*[Jews]*

He says that there are not many Jews there; and that there is a King of the Jews of the ten tribes of the Jewish people which went out of Egypt.

*[Christians]*

He says that in those countries there are many Gentiles, that is idolaters, and only a few Christians; that the supposed churches and belfries are in reality temples of idolaters, and that the pictures within them are those of idols and not of Saints. To me this seems more probable than saying that there are Christian but no divine administrations, no priests and no sacrificial mass. I do not understand that there are any Christians there to be taken into account, excepting those of Prester John, whose country is far from Calicut, on this [i.e. the western] side of the Gulf of Arabia, and borders upon the Ethiopians, that is the black people of Guinea, as also upon Egypt, that is the country of the Sultan of Babylon [Cairo]. This Prester John has priests, who offer

<sup>19</sup> This letter was written in August 1499 after the return of the *São Gabriel* under the command of João de Sá. Based on Ravenstein's translation *Journal*, pp. 137ff., from the *Paesi novamente ritrovati* (Vicenza, 1507).

<sup>20</sup> A reference to Gaspar da Gama, who was evidently in great demand after his arrival in Lisbon and spent much time in conversations at court and among the merchant community in Lisbon.

sacrifices, respect the Gospels and the Laws of the Church, much is done by other Christians.<sup>21</sup>

*[Trade with Egypt]*

The Sultan has a port on the Red Sea, and the route from Alexandria to that port passes throughout his territories, it being a journey of quite lxxx days. At that port all spices coming from Calichut are discharged.

*[A Pearl Fishery]*

There is an island about a league from the mainland, inhabited by fishermen, who do nothing but fish for pearls. There is no water in the island, and many barges go daily to a large river on the mainland where they are filled with water-no tubs or barrels being used. When the animals of the island see these barges return, they immediately hasten to the shore to drink out of these barges. Pearls are not fished at any island except this one which lies quite 60 leagues this side of Calichut. It is inhabited by Gentiles, who set great store by cows and oxen, whom they almost worship, so that anyone discovered to have eaten beef is adjudged guilty of death.

*[Taprobana]*

Taprobana, concerning which Pliny wrote so fully, was not known to the pilot, for it must be quite out at sea, away from the mainland.

*[A Pagoda]*

At Calicut there is a temple and whoever enters it before noon on the seventh Wednesday dies [is frightened] because of diabolical apparitions.

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<sup>21</sup> Compare this description with the one found in Sernigi's first letter of the previous month. This statement supports the argument that the Portuguese officers of the fleet, including most probably Vasco da Gama, João de Sá, and Nicolão Coelho had recognized in advance of their return from Calicut that the Zamorin and his subjects were not members of a lapsed Christian sect. Of course, neither Vasco da Gama, his officers, or even Gaspar da Gama evidently believed it politic to inform D. Manuel of this unwelcomed reality. As reflected in his instructions to Pedro Álvares Cabral of March 1500, the king still held to this belief writing 'He [God] considers Himself better served by the fact that the holy Christian faith is communicated and joined between you and us as it was for six hundred years after the coming of Jesus Christ.' Cf. Castanheda LI C. XXX (78-80).



The Jewish pilot affirms that this is most certainly true, and that on a certain day of the year some lamps in this same temple begin to burn spontaneously and cause many deformities of nature to appear.

*[Moorish Navigation]*

He, moreover, stated that in those seas they navigate without compasses, but with the aid of quadrants of wood. This seems to be a difficult thing to do, especially during a fog, when it is impossible to see the stars. They also have a kind of very small anchor, but I do not know how it is used. The planks of their vessels are held together by cords, and they are three palms longer than the beam. All the vessels of that country are built at Calichut, for no wood is found elsewhere.

*[Suitable Exports]*

The articles of merchandise most suitable for that country seem to be coral, copper kettles and thin plates of the same metal; tartar, spectacles (for there are countries where a pair of them fetches a high price), course linens, wine, oil, thin brocades, and also boccasins, that is cloths. The said Jew has thrown much light on all these matters.

*[Plans of King Manuel]*

Our King of Portugal is very keen in this matter and has already ordered four vessels to be got ready besides two caravels, well armed to sail in January with plenty of merchandise.<sup>22</sup> Should the King of Calicut not allow the Portuguese to trade in those countries, the captain of these vessels is instructed to capture as many native craft as he can. In my opinion he will be able to capture as many as he chooses, for they are frail, and so badly constructed that they can only sail before the wind. Of these native vessels, engaged in the spice trade, there are very many.

*[Elephants]*

The principal animals of this country are elephants, which they employ in war. On the back of the animal they place a kind of castle sheltering

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<sup>22</sup> Cabral's fleet of thirteen ships and 1500 men departed from Lisbon on 9 March 1500. Cf. William Brooks Greenlee, *The Voyage of Pedro Álvares Cabral to Brazil and India* (London, 1937).

three or four fighting men, in addition to whom there is one man, and he the most important, who guides the animal, as described by Pliny. Some kings there are who have 1500 elephants each, others a thousand and others eight hundred, according to the extent of their dominions. When they wish to beach their ships they do so by the strength of these animals, and they make them run, which seem fabulous, but it is nevertheless true.

*[Precious Stones]*

Those who have returned say that precious stones (jewels) are plentiful, but dear in comparison with other merchandise. Neither the captain nor the others have brought back jewels worth taking into account, and this makes me think that they are not found there, but come from afar. The princes and kings of those countries value precious stones very much.

Storax, benzoin, civet and similar things are not as plentiful there as I was led to believe.

*[The Royal Title]*

Our king has taken a title from those countries, viz. King of Portugal and Algarve on this and on the other side of the sea, in Africa, Lord of Guinea, and of the conquest, navigation and commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India.

That is what I was able to learn from some persons of intelligence who returned with this fleet. And if I have written it down somewhat at random you, Sir, will pardon and excuse me.

#### APPENDIX IV

### HONORS GRANTED TO VASCO DA GAMA, 1499–1502

a. *D. Manuel's Royal Grant 24 December 1499 Promising to Give Vasco da Gama Possession of the Vila of Sines*<sup>1</sup>

We, the King, make known to all those who see this grant, that bearing in mind the merits of Vasco da Gama, *fidalgo* of our household, and of the many services that he has done for us in the discovery of the Indies, have decided to give, gift, and grant him the Vila of Sines, by sworn right and as heritable property, with its revenues and taxes, save God's tithe on the sea and on the land, and with civil and criminal jurisdiction over it, and as it belongs to the Order of Santiago, before making out the grant-letter formally, we have first to render satisfaction for it to the said Order, once we have received dispensation from the Holy Father to be able to exchange it against another village in this kingdom pertaining to the Crown. And also, we have to render satisfaction to Dom Luís de Noronha, *alcaide-mor* of the said Vila for the said post of *alcaide*. However, it pleases us, and we promise him by this [decree] that if the said Dom Luís does wish to come to an agreement with us in order to leave the said *alcaldaria*, as soon as the said dispensation arrives to make the said exchange, we will order that the said Vasco da Gama be given his grant of the jurisdiction, lordship, and revenues of the said Vila, in the form and manner in which we are accustomed to give similar Vilas to other persons, and as for the said castle, whenever we come to an agreement with the said Dom Luís about it, or if he leaves it for any other reason, we will give it to the said Vasco da Gama, as his right, in the same way as the said Vila.... Written at Lisbon the xxiiij day of the month of December, by Joham da Fonseca, in the year one thousand, four hundred and ninety nine. The King.

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<sup>1</sup> Found in the Biblioteca Nacional. Lisbon, and given in Teixeira de Aragão, *Vasco da Gama e a Vidigueira*, Document 10, pp. 220–221.

b. *D. Manuel's Royal Grant of 10 January 1500? Conceding the Title of Admiral of the Indian Seas to Vasco da Gama etc.*<sup>2</sup>

Dom Manuel by Grace of God, King of Portugal and of the Algarves on either side of the sea in Africa, Lord of Guinea, and of the Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India. To those who see this letter of ours, make it known: that the discovery of the land of Guinea having begun in the year 1433 by my uncle the Infante Dom Henrique with the intention and desire that through the coast of the land of Guinea, India was to be found and discovered, which until now had never been known through there, not only with the intention that great fame and profit might follow to these Kingdoms from the riches that are therein, which were always possessed by the Moors, but so that the faith of Our Lord should be spread through more parts, and His Name be known. And afterwards, the King Dom Afonso, my uncle, and the King Dom João my cousin, wanting with the same desires to prosecute the said work, with a good number of deaths and expenses in their time, until the Rio do Infante was discovered in the year 1482, which is 1885 leagues from where they first began to discover. And we, with the same desire, wishing to accomplish the work of the said Infante and Kings, our predecessors, had begun, trusting that Vasco da Gama, *fidalgo* of our household, was such that in pursuit of our service and in order to carry out our order, he would take upon his own person the entire peril, and risk his own life, we sent him as Captain major of our fleet, sending with him Paulo da Gama his brother, and Nicolau Coelho, also a *fidalgo* of our household, in order to find the said India, in which voyage he served us in such a manner that whereas in all those years since the said discovery had commenced, and so many captains sent out, the said 1885 leagues had been discovered, he in this voyage alone discovered 1550 leagues, in addition to a great gold mine and many rich towns and cities, with a great trade, and finally he reached and discovered India, which all those writers who have given descriptions of the world rank higher in wealth than any other country, which from all time had been coveted by the Emperors and Kings of the world, and for the sake of which

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<sup>2</sup> ANTT, *Livro dos Místicos* I, fo. 204; and given in Teixeira de Aragão, *Vasco da Gama e a Vidigueira*, Document 14, pp. 224–225; Herculano, *Roteiro*, pp. 169–175; Correia, *The Three Voyages*, Appendix, i–vi; and Ravenstein, *Journal*, pp. 230–232.

such heavy expenses had been incurred in this kingdom, and so many captains and other men had lost their lives, a country in fact in which all kings not only desired to possess but even to discover.

This discovery, and work begun so long ago, he accomplished at a greater sacrifice of life and of treasure, and at greater peril to his own person, than suffered by those who came before him. Paulo da Gama, his brother, died during the course of the voyage, as well as half the men whom we sent out in this fleet, having overcome many perils, not only because of the desire to provide trustworthy information on these territories and all connected with them.

And bearing in mind the great services yielded to our ourselves and our kingdoms by this voyage and discovery: the great advantages accruing from there, not only to our kingdoms but to all Christendom: the injury done to the infidels [Muslims] who, until now, have enjoyed the advantages offered by India: and more especially the hope that all the people of India will rally round Our Lord, seeing that they may easily be led to a knowledge of his Holy Faith, some of them already having been instructed in it: desiring moreover, to recompense him for his services, as befits a prince when dealing with those who have so greatly and so well served him, and to bestow upon him a grace and favor: with full knowledge, and out of our royal and absolute power, without his having solicited it, nor any other person on his behalf, we grant him, freely and irrevocably, from this day in perpetuity, an annuity of 300,000 *reis*, to be paid to him and his descendents, and in part to pay this we grant him a new tithe on fishing in the towns of Sines and Vila Nova de Milfontes, in such the manner that to us and our Crown and Kingdom pertains, and by which possession may in price and value raise annually the sum of 60,000 *reis*, and in case a surplus results it will remain with him and his heirs, and if a shortfall we shall not be obligated to make up the difference, Dom Martinho de Castelbranco, *vedor* of our treasury, had this tithe which he surrendered so that we might give it to the said Vasco da Gama and to him we gave him satisfaction with another benefice, and we also gave and wanted him [Vasco da Gama] to possess our excise [*sisas*] levied on the town of Sine, that is 130,000 *reis* each year which is the value that the said excise is worth at the moment... Moreover, we grant to him and wish him and his descendents to possess by our excise of the town of Santiago [Cacém] 40,000 *reis* each year... And as for the 70,000 *reis* lacking to

complete the said 300,000 *reis* we will order and grant him this sum from the royal timber trade of this city of Lisbon... We also make him Admiral of the said India, with all the honors, prerogatives, liberties, power, jurisdiction, revenues, quit-rents, and duties that by right should accompany the said Admiralty, and which the Admiral in these kingdoms possess, as is contained in more detail in its manual.<sup>3</sup>... Given in our city of Lisbon, the tenth day of January: Gaspar Rodriguez wrote this in the year of Our Lord, one thousand, five hundred and two[?].<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In the remainder of this letter, D. Manuel granted Vasco da Gama and his descendants the right to send out 200 *cruzados* a year to India to purchase goods which would come into the kingdom duty free to the Crown and pay only 5% to the Order of Christ. The King also granted the title of Dom to Vasco da Gama, his brother Ayres, his Teresa, and to all of their direct descendants who kept the name 'Gama.'

<sup>4</sup> On the dating of this letter for 1500 instead of 1502, cf. Anselmo Braamcamp Freire, "O Almirantado da Índia: Data da sua criação" *Arquivo Historico Portuguez I* (1903) pp. 25–32. Discussed in Subrahmanyam, *Career and Legend* pp. 170–174.

APPENDIX V

VASCO DA GAMA'S SAILING INSTRUCTIONS TO  
PEDRO ÁLVARES CABRAL, CA. 1500<sup>1</sup>

*Instructions*

It is in this manner that it appears to Vasco da Gama that Pedro Álvares should proceed on his way, if it please Our Lord.

*Item.* Firstly, before he departs to make very good rules in order that some ships may not lose other, in this wise.

Namely. Each time that he intends to change course the Captain General will make two fires<sup>2</sup> [cannon shots] and all shall reply with two others each. And after they have replied thus all shall change course. And likewise there shall be made a signal of one fire [cannon shot] to follow and three to remove bonnets and four to lower [sail]. Except if any ship cannot carry so much sail as the Flagship, and the strength of the weather requires him to lower. And no one shall change course nor lower nor remove bonnets without first the Captain General shall make the said fires and all have replied. And after they have lowered none shall make sail until after the Captain General makes three fires and all reply and if anybody is missing they shall not make sail but only proceed with short sail until the day comes so that the ships cannot go so fast that by daylight they will be unable to see one another. And to make ready for sailing any [ship] that is dismasted shall make many fires so that the other ships may come to her.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on a document discovered by F.A. de Varnhagen, published in his *História geral do Brasil* (2 vols., Rio de Janeiro, 1854), I: 422–425, presented to the ANTT, lost and subsequently rediscovered and published by Antonio Baião in his *História da Colonização Portuguesa do Brasil* (3 vols., Porto, 1921–1924) I: xvi–xix, and by S.E. Morison in “Sailing Instructions of Vasco da Gama to Pedro Álvares Cabral (1500)” in *The Mariner's Mirror* XXIV/4 (1938), pp. 402–408.

<sup>2</sup> Morison argued that that the term *foguos* which has generally been translated as cannon shots should instead be interpreted as ‘fires’ in the braziers carried about the ships which would yield smoke during the day and fire at night. Cf. “Sailing Instructions”, p. 406 n. 2.

If the ships departing from this city [Lisbon] before running down to the Canaries should encounter a tempest so that they have to turn back, they should do everything possible so that all may return to this city. And if any cannot do so they should endeavor so far as possible to reach Setuuel<sup>3</sup> and thence whoever finds himself there shall send word immediately here where he is in order to receive orders what he should do.

*Item.* After they have departed hence in good time they will make their route direct to the Island of Samtiago calling beforehand at the Island of Sam Nicolão in case of any necessity through illness at the Island of Sam Tiago. And if at the time they arrive there they may have water enough for four months they must not call at the said island nor make any delay only insofar as weather serves.

If these ships having departed from this coast separate themselves by reason of a tempest from the others or that by reason of a tempest one runs into one harbor and the other into another. The manner for them to join up.

And if any of the ships making from the North the said signals cannot be seen you will go on your route with all the rest direct to *Agoada de Sam Bras*.<sup>4</sup>

And when you are there taking on water, the said [lost] ship will be able to catch up with you. And if it does not catch up to you, you shall depart when you are ready and you shall leave such marks for it that it may know that you have been there and be able to follow you.

*[Sailing Directions from the Cape Verde Islands]*

[With the wind] on the stern they should make their course to the South and if they must swerve it should be to the Southwest. And so long as the wind is ahead they shall sail on the wind [and current?] until they put the Cabo de Bôa Esperança directly to the East. And from there on they are to navigate according as the weather serves and gain more because when they are in the said region they will not want weather, with Our Lord's help, for to double the said Cape. And in this manner, he thinks, the navigation will be shortest and the ships more secure

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<sup>3</sup> Setubal.

<sup>4</sup> The Bay of São Brás or Mossel Bay, where Da Gama and his crews had spent thirteen days taking on water and wood in November and December 1497.



from shipworms and in this way the provisions will keep better and the people will be more healthy.

And in case (may it *not* please Our Lord) any one of these ships shall be separated from the flagship she should hold her luff so far as she can to double the Cape and go to *Agoada de Sam Bras*. And if she arrives there before the flagship she ought to anchor very well and to wait since it is necessary that the Captain General come here to take on his water so that henceforth he may have nothing to do with the land but keep away from it to Mozambique for the health of the people and have nothing to do with it.

And in case the Captain General come first to this watering place before any ship or ships that should be lost there should be marks made by which will be indicated the courses to the ships that are lost, and that this should be done with much good experience of all the pilots that... [end of document].

## APPENDIX VI

### CALCOEN: A NARRATIVE OF THE SECOND VOYAGE OF VASCO DA GAMA TO CALICUT, 1502<sup>1</sup>

#### Calcoen [*Calicut*]

This is the voyage which a man wrote himself, how far he sailed with seventy ships from the river of Lisbon, in Portugal, to go to Calicut in India, and this occurred in the year 1501. And they sailed along the coast of Barbary, and came before a town called Meskebijl [Mers el Kebir], and were there defeated with great loss and dishonor, and lost there many Christians, whose souls God must have had. This battle took place the day of St. James, of the above said year.<sup>2</sup>

That castle is one mile from the town called Oeraen [Oran], and there come many wicked Christian merchants from Venice and Genoa, and they sell to the Turks suits of armour, arquebusses, and ammunition to fight against the Christians, and they have there their staple. I was six months on the coast of Barbary, and suffered much misery in the Straits.

In the year 1502, on the 10th day of February, we sailed from the river of Lisbon, and took our course to India.

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<sup>1</sup> Following the voyages of Cabral (1500–1501) and João de Nova (1501–1502), Vasco da Gama returned to India in a voyage of 1502–1503. By this time, D. Manuel and his ‘Admiral of the Indian Seas’ had decided to consolidate the trading and military position of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean basin. As Alberto Cantino, an agent for the duke of Ferrara in Lisbon wrote at this time the objective of the 1502 fleet was ‘to guard and defend the mouth of the Red Sea, so that the ships of the Sultan could not pass between Mecca to Calicut carrying spices.’ The 1502 fleet was divided into three squadrons totaling 20 ships. Of the four main contemporary sources on this fleet, one is this anonymous brief description compiled by a Flemish sailor about the fleet first published in 1504. As with the *Journal* of the 1497 voyage, this document reflects the perspective not of Vasco da Gama and the commanders, but events as perceived by a member of crew. This selection is from *Calcoen: A Dutch Narrative of the Second Voyage of Vasco da Gama to Calicut, Printed at Antwerp circa 1504* with introduction and translation by J. Ph. Berjeau (London, 1874). It demonstrates the great strides made by the Portuguese in the three years since da Gama’s return from his initial voyage.

<sup>2</sup> This is a reference to the author having taken part in D. João de Meneses, the first count of Tarouca’s abortive naval attack on Mers el-Kebir on the Moroccan coast in late July 1501.

The first land which we found was called Kenan,<sup>3</sup> and there are many islands which mostly belong to the King of Spain, and they are well 200 miles from Portugal.

We sailed thence, and directed our course to southeast, and arrived at the cape,<sup>4</sup> near which we had remained, and it is well 500 miles from Portugal. The people there walk stark naked, men and women, and they are black. And they have no shame, for they wear no clothes, and the women have converse with their men like monkeys, and they know neither good nor evil.

On the 5th day of March we directed our course by south-west, 100 miles out to sea.

On the 29th day of March we were sailing at least 1,200 miles from Portugal, and there we lost sight of the Great Bear,<sup>5</sup> and the sun was above our head, so that we could not see the shadow of anything, nor any mark in the sky on the 2nd day of April.

In that sea we saw fishes flying with the birds, as far as a man may shoot with a cross bow; and they are as big as a mackerel, a herring or a pilcher. And during a course of at least 300 miles, we saw black gulls with white throats; their tails is like that of a swan, and they are bigger than wood pigeons; they were catching the flying fishes as they were flying.

On the 11th of April we were so far, that precisely at noon we saw the sun to the north.

At the same time we had in the sky no mark which could help us, neither sun nor moon, but our compass and our maps.

Then we came to another sea, where there was nothing living, neither fish nor flesh, nor anything else.

On the 20th day of April the wind turned against us, and last five weeks, driving us a thousand miles out of the direct route, and we were fairly twelve days without sighting any land or sand.

On the 22nd day of May, there was winter there, and the days lasted only eight hours; and there was a great storm of rain, hail, snow, thunder and lightning. The sky was open towards the Cape of Good Hope, and there was a storm. When we arrived near the Cape, we directed our course to the north-east.

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<sup>3</sup> Cape Nun, first passed by the Portuguese in 1421, on the west African coast opposite the Canary Islands.

<sup>4</sup> Cape Verde.

<sup>5</sup> Ursa Major.

On the 10th day of June we could see neither the Great Bear nor the Pole Star, and we did not know the sky, which threw us in great perplexity.

On the 14th of June we arrived before a town called Scarfal,<sup>6</sup> and there we asked to buy and sell; but they would not allow it to us, because the inhabitants felt great anxieties from the side of the Paepians river;<sup>7</sup> there flows a river from the country of the Paepians,<sup>8</sup> for the country of the Paepians is situate in the interior of that country, shut by the walls, and they have no other issue towards the sea that the river of Scafal, and they were disturbed with anxiety lest we might discover that road; because the King of Scarfal was then making war against the Paepians. For we spoke with the people of the Paepians' country, who had been made prisoners, and were their slave people; for the Paepians' country abounds in silver, gold, precious stones and riches, and this kingdom is 400 miles from the Cape of Good Hope.

Thence we sailed for an island called Miskebijc,<sup>9</sup> and it is 200 miles from Scarfal, and the country is called Maerabite, and there they do not know money, but they exchange gold and silver for other goods.

On the 18th of July we sailed thence and arrived in a kingdom called Hylo, and here is a king very rich, and him we compelled to pay 1,500 matcals annually to the King of Portugal; each matcall is worth in Flemish money 9s. 4 pence.<sup>10</sup> He has, moreover, from the same king a banner, as a mark that he recognizes him for his sovereign. But when the king came out from his court, they threw water and small branches over his head, and they were very merry and clapped their hands, and sung and danced. The king and all the people, men and women, walk naked, but they have a piece of stuff round their loins, and they go every day to wash themselves in the sea. There are here oxen without horns, but they have a saddle on their back. There are also sheep with big tails as there were never such, and the tail is better than half of the sheep. There are also crows which are black and white; there grow also onions which are nearly two palms wide.

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<sup>6</sup> Sofala.

<sup>7</sup> The Zambezi.

<sup>8</sup> This word is probably a Dutch corruption of the term *Pape Jan* (Prester John). Cf. W.G.L. Randles, "South-east Africa as Shown in Selected Maps of the Sixteenth Century," *Imago Mundi* 13 (1956), pp. 69–88.

<sup>9</sup> Mozambique.

<sup>10</sup> On the fleet's arrival at the rich sultanate of Kilwa, and the reduction of its Mahdali sultan to a vassal of the Portuguese Crown, cf. Ames, *Vasco da Gama*, pp. 88–90.

On the 20th of July we sailed thence, and arrived in an island called Melinda,<sup>11</sup> which is 100 miles from Kilo. But we missed it, and went to the Cape of Saint Mary.<sup>12</sup> There we put out things in order, and we had still to cross a gulf which is well 700 miles wide. There we left the country of the Paepians, and arrived before the country of Marabia,<sup>13</sup> and it was the 30th day of July. And after having sailed 100 miles, we shaped our course to the north-east.

It must be known that there is winter all the time from April to September, and then the wind blows from the south-east during the whole time; and from September to April it is summer, and the wind blows the whole time from the north-east, from each a half year. And as is the wind so is the current, and the summer is of a very bad kind, for I suffered by it for a whole year.

On the 5th day of August we saw the Pole Star, and were very glad of it, for we were still more than 500 miles from India.

In fifteen days we sailed across the great gulf of 770 miles, and it was on the 21st day of August we saw the land of India, and saw a great city called Combaen,<sup>14</sup> and it is a large trading town, and it is situate near the country of Caldea or Babylon, on the river of Cobar.<sup>15</sup>

Near the land beyond High Arabia is the town of Mecha, where is buried Mahomet, the devil of the pagans; and the town is 600 miles from the east, whence spices, pearls, and precious stones are brought to our country after crossing a gulf.

We passed beyond a town called Oan, and there is a king; this king has at least 8,000 horses and 700 elephants of war along in this country; and each town has his own king, and we took 400 ships from Oan,<sup>16</sup> and we killed the people and burnt the ships.

Thence we sailed and arrived in an island called Avidibe;<sup>17</sup> there we took in water and wood, and we landed at least 300 of our invalids, and we killed a lizard which was at least five feet long.

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<sup>11</sup> The city of Malindi or Melinde which is not an island.

<sup>12</sup> Most probably Ras Momi on the island of Socotra.

<sup>13</sup> Perhaps a reference to Iram in south Arabia.

<sup>14</sup> Cambay.

<sup>15</sup> Saubermattee.

<sup>16</sup> Goa.

<sup>17</sup> Anjedive.

On the 11th day of September we arrived in a kingdom called Can-naer,<sup>18</sup> and it is situate near a chain of mountains called Montebyl,<sup>19</sup> and there we watched the ships of Meccha, and they are ships which carry the spices which come to our country, and we spoiled the woods, so that the King of Portugal alone should get spices from there. But it was impossible for us to accomplish our design. Nevertheless at the same time we took a Meccha ship, on board of which were 380 men and many women and children, and we took from it at least 12,000 ducats and at least 10,000 more worth of goods, and we burnt the ship and all the people on board with gun powder, on the first day of October.<sup>20</sup>

Here also are stags, which have also large horns which rise straight from their head, and they are twisted like a screw.

On the 20th day of October we went to the country of Cannaer,<sup>21</sup> and bought there all kinds of spices, and the king came in great state, bringing with him two elephants and several strange animals which I cannot name.

On the 27th of October we sailed thence, and arrived in a kingdom called Calcoen,<sup>22</sup> which is 40 miles from Cannaer, and we mustered our forces before the town, and we fought with them during three days, and we took a great number of people, and we hanged them to the yards of the ships, and taking them down, we cut off their hands, feet, and heads; and we took one of their ships and threw into it the hands, feet, and heads, and we wrote a letter, which we put on a stick, and we left that to go a-drift towards the land. We took there a ship which we put on fire, and burnt many of the subjects of the king.

On the 2nd day of November we sailed from Calcoen 60 miles to a kingdom called Cusschaïn;<sup>23</sup> and between these two towns is a Christian kingdom called Granor,<sup>24</sup> and there are many good Christians; and in this kingdom live many Jews, and they have a prince there. You understand that all the Jews of the country are also the subjects of the same prince. And the Christians have nothing to do with anybody, and they are good Christians. They neither sell nor buy anything during

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<sup>18</sup> Cannanur.

<sup>19</sup> Mount Ely.

<sup>20</sup> On the capture of this ship, the *Miri* cf. Ames, *Vasco da Gama*, pp. 91–93; Subrahmanyam, *Career and Legend*, pp. 205–210.

<sup>21</sup> Cannanur.

<sup>22</sup> Calicut.

<sup>23</sup> Cochin.

<sup>24</sup> Travancore.

the consecrated days, and they neither eat nor drink with anybody but Christians. They willingly came to our ships with fowls and sheep, and caused us to make good cheer. They had just sent priests to the pope at Rome to know the true faith.

On the 28th day of November we went to the country of Cusschäin to speak with the king; and the king came to us in great state, bringing with him six war elephants; for he has many elephants in his country, and many strange animals which I do not know. Then our chiefs which we had with us spoke to the king, in order to buy spices and other things.

On the 3rd day of January we sailed thence for a town which is called Coloën,<sup>25</sup> and there came many good Christians, and they filled two of our ships with spices; and there are nearly 25,000 Christians, and they paid us a tribute like the Jews. There are nearly 300 Christian churches, and they bear the names of the apostles and other saints. Fifty miles from Coloën is an island which is called Steloun,<sup>26</sup> where is found the best cinnamon which can be met with.

Six days from Coloën is a town called Lapis,<sup>27</sup> and near by is Saint Thomas in the sea. It is there that for a fortnight about the time of his festival the sea may be passed on foot, and they give the sacrament to all who are worthy to receive it, and refuse it to the unworthy. And this place is four days distant from the great city of Edissen,<sup>28</sup> where he built the large palace. But this above-mentioned town of Lapis is for the most part ruined, and the Christians inhabit it on condition of paying a tribute, and everybody, including the king and the queen, walk naked, with the exception of their loins, which are covered.

Eight hundred miles from Coloën is a large town called Melatk,<sup>29</sup> whence come the best cloves and nutmegs, valuable goods, and precious stones.

The people of this country have black teeth, because they eat the leaves of the trees and a white thing like chalk actually with the leaves, and it comes from it that the teeth become black, and that is called tombour,<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Quilon or Kollam.

<sup>26</sup> Ceylon.

<sup>27</sup> Meliapor.

<sup>28</sup> Edisse?

<sup>29</sup> Melaka.

<sup>30</sup> Betel.

and they carry it always with them wherever they go or are travelling. The pepper grows as the vine does in our country.

There are in the country cats as big as our foxes, and it is from them that the musk comes, and it is very dear, for a cat is worth 100 ducats, and the musk grows between his legs, and under his tail.

Ginger grows as a reed, and cinnamon as a willow; and every year they strip the cinnamon from its bark, however thin it is, and the youngest is the better. The true summer is in December and January.

On the 12th of February we fought with the king of Calcoen, who had thirty-five ships, besides the rowing boats. In each of these boats were about sixty to seventy men, and we had no more than twenty two men, and with that, thanks to God, we beat them; and we took two large ships, and slaughtered all the people that were in them, and burnt the ships before the town of Calcoen, where the king was present; and the next day we sailed for Canaer, and prepared everything to return to Portugal. That happened in 1503, the 12th day of February.

On the 22nd day of March, after the setting of the sun, it was on the north, and the 13th day of March we lost the polar star.

On the 26th day of March we made out two islands, but we did not choose to land there, because we were loaded with valuable goods, and as the people of the country saw that we would not land, they lighted a large fire to attract us.

On the 10th of April we saw again the country of the Paepians, and then we had been forty-eight days in the gulf.

On the 13th day of April we saw the country of Meskebail,<sup>31</sup> previously mentioned, and we remained there till the 16th day of June, and thence we sailed again; and that is the time when the days are shortest.

There is a great kingdom called Coloén, previously described. There the pearls grow in a kind of oyster in the sea; the sea is no more than four to seven fathoms deep, and there are fishermen who fish them with wooden baskets. They put the baskets in their mouth or on their nose, and then go down under the water, where they may remain nearly a quarter or an hour, and when they have caught something they come back to the surface, and so on.

On the 14th day of June bread and victuals began to fail us, and we still were nearly 1,780 miles from Lisbon.

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<sup>31</sup> Mozambique.



On the 30th day of June we found an island, where we killed at least 300 men, and we caught many of them, and we took there water and departed thence on the 1st day of August.

On the 13th day of August we saw again the polar star, and we still were well 600 miles from Portugal.

In the year 1502 the infidels lost 180 ships; but if the ships had not been lost, we should have been very badly off, for they were our enemies.

And thus we came back healthy and safe to Portugal.

Deo Gratias

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